

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY

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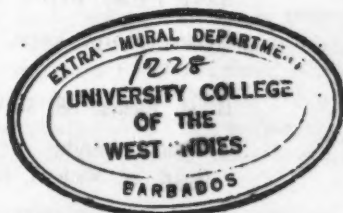


COVER ILLUSTRATION :

R. BRIDGENS—"Negro Dances"

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY

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WANTED

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY, VOL. I, Nos. 1-2

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APOLOGY

THE Editors wish to apologise for certain errors in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 4, and particularly the omission of acknowledgments to Mr. B. de Verteuil for the loan of a book containing the engraving used on the cover. Unfortunately arrangements for checking proofs, &c., made by the Editor broke down during his absence on leave.

Editorial Note

THE articles in this issue of *Caribbean Quarterly* are devoted to different phases of popular life in the West Indies. Our contributors include Professor F. Cassidy of Wisconsin, who was awarded a Fulbright Research Fellowship to study the language of Jamaica, Mme. Elodie Jourdain who, after spending a large part of her life in France, has now returned to work in the West Indies where she was born and passed her early years; Mr. Andrew Carr of Port-of-Spain, who has consistently associated himself with scientific studies, particularly in natural history, and Mr. Frank Mayhew, whose contribution is unique in that he writes about popular life from the inside.

We are most grateful to our contributors, and it is fitting to remind them that the dominant theme of these articles may be regretted by considerable numbers of West Indians who may feel that they have illuminated those dark corners of West Indian life which were best forgotten, i.e., "bad" English and French, crude superstitions, a past linked with Africa, and charismatic leadership. These doubters pose the question whether an attempt to reassess the achievements of the "common man" in the West Indies during the past 120 years is compatible with a relentless drive towards enlightenment and progress in science, technique and politics. To this we must answer that progress is not merely compatible with a study of the backward past, but that our thinking and planning for tomorrow will lead us astray if it is not based on a realistic study of yesterday. Enlightenment is not the process of "keeping things dark".

We do not need to look far into the history of the rural communities of the West Indies to realise that they have pursued a species of underground life based on a system of relationships, practices and beliefs cut off from that which was socially accepted and constantly under fire from the official quarter. A sympathetic yet objective approach to an understanding of popular life is a necessary step toward drawing our society more closely together and healing the cleavage between that which has prestige and recognition on the one hand, and popular life on the other.

But whilst knowledge of popular life helps us to understand the conflicts and cross-currents which make up the general movement forward in which we all hope to participate, it does not provide the only incentive to study. In the words, music and dance of West Indian folklore there is much that is of great value not only to West Indians but to the world at large, and unless an increasing number of people takes an interest in studying, documenting and recording it, it will disappear for ever into oblivion, and with it will perish the strange and absorbing story of how, out of the social rubble inherited in 1837 a resilient people began to create its own New World.

Language and Folklore

With Some Illustrations from Jamaican Folk Speech

FREDERIC G. CASSIDY

SINCE language is the vehicle by means of which almost every human thought, attitude, and activity is expressed and transmitted, from man to man and from generation to generation, there is a connection between language and folklore. Yet to the student of linguistics it is an incidental connection; properly speaking, the point at which language and folklore meet lies rather in the sphere of psychology.

Nevertheless, in at least three ways language does give a glimpse of the workings of the folk mind: through lore inherited from the past, which survives in words even after it may have died out of belief or custom; through changes in the forms of words that may reflect folk attitudes or patterns of behaviour; and through the processes of giving names—especially new names—to a variety of things.

Folk language differs from the language of the educated by being almost wholly of the ear. There is little or no influence through the eye, no standard of writing or spelling—the *correct* language of the printed page—to guide or restrain. Each person hears as well as he can, and repeats as well as he can, a reasonable approximation being all that communication demands. This means that changes in some aspects of folk speech, while not erratic, are likely to be more varied than those in cultivated speech. At the same time, the general traditionalism of simpler cultures may be seen also in language. The interest of dialect study is often that of the antiquarian, who finds still flourishing in it words, meanings, pronunciations, and turns of phrase that long since have disappeared from the educated speech. Poets know this and frequently return to dialect and to older stages of the language, to seek at that ever-fresh source the bubblings of waters under the earth.

The word *folk* is taken here to mean the mass of people both rural and urban (but by the nature of things, chiefly rural) who have a minimum of formal education, who remain illiterate or subliterate, and who therefore depend very much on inherited knowledge and beliefs, skills passed on within the family or the home community, customs learnt directly by participation in day-to-day living. In Jamaica this *folk* is very largely descended from African slaves, with inconsiderable admixtures of American Indian, and more recently of East Indian.

As early as the end of the eighteenth century, Edward Long informs us in his *History of Jamaica* that the creole or Jamaican-born blacks hold the Africans in the utmost contempt, styling them "salt-water Negroes" and "Guiney birds". And less than a century ago (as we are told in *The Etymology of Jamaican Grammar*) the mountain people sought to dissociate themselves firmly from the plantation folk, who still used such barbarous Africanisms as the exclamation *Babwa!* and accented particular words and syllables in the harsh Guinea manner. Yet the African folklore and customs were often all that the slaves had to keep up their spirits in a new land; they were given no schooling, and for the first century there

was not even any serious attempt to Christianize them. The mixed bloods, unable to attain equality in white society, were thrown back in some measure upon the world of the servants. The role of the *nana* or nurse in preserving folk songs, tales, riddles, superstitions, and herb lore is not to be under-estimated. In short, while the Jamaican folk has become ever more Europeanized, it has tenaciously kept up a strong element of Africanism.

Some words still widely used are recollections of past superstitions—no longer actively believed in perhaps, but not forgotten, and occasionally resorted to when the white man's civilization or an individual's own powers fail to cope with his problem. Thus Obeah has long been prohibited by law, and is always spoken of with a laugh; but the laughter is apologetic, never sneering, and the belief in magic powers, in visible and active spirits (*duppies*), and in preternatural explanations of anything out of the ordinary, persist deep within the folk consciousness.

The word *overlook*, for example, has such suggestions in at least two respects. It used to be the custom for slaves to protect their grounds from praedial thieves by setting up in them what they called *watchmen*. De la Bèche, in his *Notes on the Present Condition of the Negroes in Jamaica*, describes these watchmen as being commonly composed of pieces of the wood-ant's nest, the roots of a particular grass, grave dirt, bunches of feathers . . . small boxes, resembling the coffins of infants and so on—objects associated with Obeah and therefore sources of dread. By 1825, however, this magic was no longer effective: thieves were laughing at such scarecrow practices. Thus the watchman became a thing of the past; yet a similar practice persists to the present time—that of planting a type of coarse beans, called *overlook* beans, as the highest row on a hillside patch, or by the fence along a road. This may not be effective against thieves, but it will in a much subtler way overlook and protect the cultivation against less tangible enemies—which are, of course, the most dangerous.

Overlook has another meaning. This time it is a verb, and it suggests the belief in something analogous to the evil eye. Each person has a sort of magnetic power within, a power which expresses itself through the eye. If a baby is too much looked at, even to be admired, the *magnet* of the lookers may be too strong for the baby and do it harm. A baby that has been overlooked will begin to pine away, and must be given certain herb remedies—among others, tea made from the overlook bean.

The belief in spirits is a part of all folklore, though these supernatural creatures take many forms and their properties and propensities differ from land to land. In Jamaica, the *duppy* is the spirit of a departed person which often returns in a visible form. Some people have the faculty for seeing duppies—an enviable thing, since it opens a window into another world filled with wonders and strange powers. The *duppy* may appear in the form of the departed person, and if not beneficent may at least be neutral. But some duppies are maleficent, and some assume frightful or brutish forms: they throw gravel at houses or into trees, making them rattle suddenly; they gallop about by night with glaring eyes, bellowing and clanking chains. Even when less dramatic, they are present in the background, putting forth a finger here or there—in the vegetable world particularly. *Duppy callalu*, unlike the many other kinds, has prickles; so has the *duppy tomato*, also known as *cockroach poison*. There are *duppy pumpkins*, *duppy cucumbers*, *duppy soursofs*,

all imitating in a smaller form the good vegetables or fruits—but even when they have no prickles and may look as appetizing as the fruits of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, birds, whose sight is often keener than that of man, will not touch them.

It has been pointed out that as belief in fairies begins to wane the fairies themselves dwindle in size. By Shakespeare's day fairies which two centuries before had been the same size as human beings, and had often intermarried with mankind, have shrunk until Queen Mab herself *comes In shape no bigger than an agate-stone On the fore-finger of an Alderman*. The quality of diminutiveness is present, too, in many of the duppy plants, and associated with it a feeling that these spirits are more playful in their mischief than harmful. Thus the *duppy fiddle* (more often called *monkey fiddle*) makes a grotesque squeaking when two sticks of it are rubbed together; and the *duppy gun*, a tiny cigar-shaped seed pod, bursts with surprising force a moment after it has been wetted.

Obeah, mentioned before, enters into a few names, for example that of the fish *obeahman drummer*, also called the *round drummer*. Fishermen say that if the obeahman is the first to swim into a pot, no other fish will enter it—so much, presumably, do they hold him in awe. The long-tailed humming-bird, known everywhere in Jamaica as the *doctor-bird*, may be named similarly in allusion to its special cleverness. The Maroons say, *Doctor-bird a cunning bird*, and its cunning is proved by the way it will creep off and hide if you succeed in knocking it down. It is a tricky bird, hard to kill. Nor is it the only one which hints of superstition. The *gimme-me-bit* (a name applied usually to the nighthawk, sometimes to the sandpiper) is best left alone; it tells us plainly, *Pick up me egg and you pick up trouble; put down me egg and you put down luck*.

There is no proof that all this lore has been brought from Africa. Some of it may be of Jamaican origin; some suggests a European source: the mingled ingredients would be difficult indeed to separate! What are we to think, for example, of *god-bush*, a common name for mistletoe? From Druidical times the evergreen properties of this plant, and the fact that it always grows aloft, have made it an object of worship. On the face of it *god-bush* looks like a word from the countryside of Britain—yet Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* does not list it, nor does the *Oxford Dictionary*. Is it a local invention, a translation, or what? At least it attests a mode of thought, as does too *spirit weed* (also known as *fit weed*, *snake weed*, and *stinking weed*). The first record of this name was made in 1699 by Sir Hans Sloane, who reported having seen the plant in Jamaica.

Other bits of lore, partly from observation and partly from surmise or invention, may be mentioned briefly. Various bright-coloured small fish, blue, mauve, and green, are called by Jamaican fishermen the *barracouta waiting-boy*. They are said to swim about whenever a barracuda is in the offing. They do not appear to do any actual service for the larger fish, nor it for them; yet the fact of their association, and the contrast between the dangerous, masterly barracuda and the liveried smaller fish, has been remarked in this name.

Two more fish that are believed to serve others are the *pilot fish*, which supposedly guides a shark to its prey, and the *nurse fish*, itself a small shark, which is said to care for smaller fish. But these tales are clearly European—Jamaican only by adoption.

Folklore is usually inherited, therefore usually old; yet legends must start somewhere. Two names that seem more recent, and perhaps represent lore for the future, are *lucky lily* and *money-fly*. About the first it is said that when you plant it you must put a bit of money at the root. Money will then come to you—and proportionately to the amount you bury. The man of faith will bury a goodly sum! The *money-fly*, too, will enrich you if you see it fly out of the rotten wood in which it has bored its hole.

II

The second means by which words may reveal the workings of the folk mind is by the explanations or reinterpretations given for changed forms. When a word is unfamiliar or hard to pronounce, the natural tendency is to simplify and familiarize it. Difficult or foreign sounds are replaced by easier native ones, and analogies are made with existing words.

This process is the same the world over. A new vegetable, for example, is brought to England from Italy, where its name was *girasole*. After a short time, English tongues have altered this: the vegetable becomes a *Jerusalem artichoke*. Then if somebody wonders what the name means, the natural inference is that the vegetable comes from Jerusalem. Indeed, so obvious does this seem that in the absence of historical fact nobody questions further. The linguist calls this process *folk-etymology*, for the new form implies at least an unconscious attempt to make sense out of meaningless sounds. The sense that is made (*Jerusalem*), though actually wrong, is better than *no sense* (*girasole*). Like nature in general, human nature abhors a vacuum.

The processes of folk-etymology are not characteristically Jamaican. Some words that exhibit it, however, are sufficiently surprising, grotesque, or quaint to deserve notice. A perfect if simple example is in the conversion of *Jew plum* and *Jew fish* to *June plum* and *June fish*, the word *Jew* having little tangible meaning to the Jamaican peasant, but *June* being familiar and meaningful—even though the fruit ripens long before June, and the fish does nothing noteworthy in this month.

Similarly, the common woodland tree at first called *bitter damson* because of its small fruits which would remind any Englishman of the damson plum, has become in Jamaica *bitter dandison* sometimes, but usually *bitter damsel*. *Dandison* may hint of the word *dandy*, but heaven knows what thoughts (if any) lie behind *bitter damsel*: the possibilities, like Cleopatra, are infinitely various! The sober phonetician, however, will cut off such speculations by pointing out that a simple and very common substitution of *l* for *n* is all that we may really have here.

The pear called *avocado* in Standard English and *alligator* by Jamaicans is a double example of folk etymology. Both names come ultimately from Aztec *ahuacatl*. But this collocation of syllables proved too much for the Spaniards' tongues, which altered it in a variety of ways, finally settling on *avocado*, *lawyer* (English *advocate*). This word could certainly be said with ease; to complete the process it was only necessary to wrench out an analogy between the man of law and the fruit: the pear is so delicious that it pleads eloquently to the palate of the most fastidious judge!

It would be pleasant to toy further with analogies between lawyers and alligators, but the linguistic facts lead us elsewhere. One of the earlier Spanish versions of *ahuacatl* is known to have been *aguacate*, and another earlier English form (perhaps influenced by French *avocat*) was *avigato*. From this last, by an easy metamorphosis, comes *alligator* pear, and people who ask questions are told that the fruit has a long neck, like an alligator. (Indeed, it is also called *long-neck* and *bottle-neck* pear.)

Other examples of folk-etymology may be seen when *gar-fish* (which in Anglo-Saxon meant spear-fish, in allusion to its sharp, prolonged jaw) becomes *guard-fish*. The addition of the *d* may be a mere phonetic accommodation, but the fact is that it produces a meaningful word, one more meaningful than *gar-fish*. If, then, the change in form is purely accidental, the establishment of the new form results from its *making better sense*.

A fruit long known in parts of Jamaica, but rather coarse and not much valued, is the *mammee-sapota*. This, too, is clearly a Spanish name; but the latter word has been reinterpreted as *supporter*, and it is explained that this fruit is a support to the people, like a *mammy*. A similar fruit, American-Spanish *chirimaya*, has become in Jamaica *cherry-moya*, and *Jeremiah*. The first of these keeps the suggestion of a fruit (though the *cherry-moya* has little resemblance to a cherry), but *moya* is meaningless. *Jeremiah* is therefore an improvement, since the entire word is rationalized.

In the names of insects we also find these alterations. The word *bungo* (from some African source) means big, clumsy, or coarse. The *bumble-bee* has become in Jamaica a *bungo-bee*; and the *newsmonger*, a large beetle that flies with a loud buzz or hum, the *news-bunga*. The *macaca* worm, which used to be considered a most delicate article of food, is now the *macongo*—a word also suggesting African folk-etymology.

The aloe plant, or *sempervive*, growing widely in Jamaica, is known variously as *sintle-bible*, *sinkle-bible*, *single-bible*, and so on. Folk-etymology may have a less obvious influence here, yet these new forms are all attempts to familiarize a most unfamiliar sort of word. The four syllables are preserved, with the accentuation on the first and third; the nasal-plus-stop-consonant group is preserved (though its original members *mp* are displaced by other combinations); the syllabic *r* yields (as it often does) to the similar syllabic *l*; the *v*'s become *b*'s; and last, a final *l* is added, probably in iteration of the first *l*. These may all be purely phonetic changes; however, the product is two real words, *single* and *bible*, not perhaps making any clear sense, yet avoiding the senselessness of *sempervive* to the folk ear.

As a last example we may look at what has happened to the *poinsiana* tree. Though not native to Jamaica, it has long been grown here, and is familiar to most people. Yet the name has proved a hard one for the folk; one hears *panchilana*, *pansilanna*, and other such attempts. Then folk-etymology steps in, and the folk tendency to personalize or personify non-human things; the result is *Fancy Anna*! Anyone who has seen a *poinsiana* tree covered with its splendid red blooms must admit that this name is a most apt and fortunate discovery, exhibiting the folk mind at its best.

III

It is probably through the giving of new names, however, that the folk mind is most clearly revealed. Objects of every day can easily become dull; familiarity defeats the eye; recognition cancels fresh observation. It says something for the liveliness of folk perception, then, that we find a host of distinctions made in such common things as foodstuffs, plants, and animal life. From the names given—and not given—to these things we can safely infer that the Jamaican folk enjoy the poetic, the grotesque, the satiric, the broadly humorous; that they are thoroughly practical, never sentimental; that their enjoyment of the beauty of nature is seldom abstract—the usefulness of a thing is what gives it consequence, and beauty without utility must be striking indeed to earn a designation.

The names of wild flowers will illustrate this point. Apart from the white man's names, some of which have been learned though as often as not applied to very different plants (*clary*, *dandelion*, *buttercup*, *marigold*, &c.), there are a good many plants, chiefly small ones, which simply remain without folk names. They have no known value as food or medicine; you cannot tie bundles with them, weave them, or thatch your house with them. Thus while their beauty is acknowledged, they remain just *wild flowers*, or else you *use them for roses*. They have no individuality beyond this. The Jamaican *shamrock* is so named by Europeans. It is known everywhere in Jamaica, but one asks in vain for a folk name. And so with a dozen or more again.

On the other hand, useful things have many names, descriptive of their appearance or of some important property they possess. *Brass-cannon* describes the shape and outer colour of one sweet-potato; *pigeon-neck* refers to the stem of another that bends as it enters the earth; *dog-blood* describes the bright red flesh of a third; still another is called *flour-barrel*, partly by description and partly because it is a very large potato and gives a plentiful provision. Other vegetables and fruits receive similar descriptive names—many of them exhibiting a touch of humour, a smack of the dramatic, an eye for the characteristic detail: *horse-foot coco*, *curl-finger pepper*, *goat-horn okra*, *smoky banana*, *frog plantain* (short, squat, and green), *crawfish cane* (from the colour) and *goat-knee cane* (from the shape), *rat-ears callalu* (from the shape of the leaf), *coolie-foot sugar* (from the colour), *lift-coat pepper* (because it looks like a lady lifting her coat), *puss-head tree* (from the appearance of the seed pod), *toad-trash* (wild pines in which the tree toads live).

The properties of things are alluded to in the *provision* sweet-potato (which, like the *flour-barrel*, provides plentifully), the *flog-all* potato (which beats every other for size), the *seven-months coco* (which comes in sooner than others), the *drop-trash* cane (which drops its dry leaves by itself), the *garden-gate* mango (which is very tough) and the *today-and-tomorrow* mango (which ripens on one side today and on the other tomorrow), the *shoe-black* flower (common hibiscus, used to polish shoes), *tie-teeth* (candy, sweets, or other very sticky food), and many more.

One striking tendency in naming is to personalize, to grant a certain vitality to non-human things, drawing them closer to the name-giver. Vegetables having superior qualities deserve titles of respect. Thus the old English story of the knighting of good beef as Sir Loin, though quite erroneous, has real counterparts in Jamaican folk names: the *Marshal* sweet-potato, the *Commander coco* and the *Duke coco*. Other vegetables or fruits are personalized by being given the names of

those who introduced them to a community: *Bobby Brown*, *John Barnett*, *Mother Thomas* sweet-potatoes. One kind of yam is called *renter* because it *rents* (that is, rends) a hole for itself; other yams require that the earth be thoroughly loosened for them, but with the *renter* you *just tease up the surface* and it does the rest. Another name for the Commander coco is *Left-man*, because, being very hard, it does not disintegrate when cooked. (Another explanation is that it is difficult to start growing, and may therefore leave a man in the lurch!) Direct humanization may be seen in the *Sally* coco and perhaps *Minty* coco. The water thrush is called *Bessy Kick-up* or *Mary Shakewell*, and the smaller pechary is the *Little Tom Fool*. The sensitive mimosa, that closes its leaves when touched, is variously *Shamer*, *Shamy*, *Shame-lady*, *Shame-old-lady*, *Shame-me-darlin*, and *Shame-me-dog*. An unwanted shoot on an orange limb is a *rider*, and wood that will not hold fire is *lazy*. The difference between men and women is recognized in *male* and *female* varieties of milkweed, dandelions, and other plants (not botanically male and female, but having coarser or finer leaves, or the like). *Man* *beefwood* makes a good timber; *woman* *beefwood* is too soft.

But the crowning piece of personification is seen in the name of a rat. Sir Charles Price, Speaker of the Assembly and a prominent planter, introduced a large brown rat to the island two hundred years ago to kill off the black rats which infested the cane fields. The black rats continually nibbled small bits out of many canes, while the brown rats would *bite and blow*—eat only a few canes, then rest awhile. When first brought in, the brown rat was thankfully called the *Sir Charles Price rat*, but in the passage of years the gentleman has been forgotten, and today the rat is *Charlie Price* himself!

Time and its passage, in the absence of clocks, must be marked in other ways. *Ten o'clock* is a kind of portulaca which blooms in mid morning; *four o'clock* is not only the familiar garden flower but a young guango tree, and *five o'clock* a kind of baubinia, which reputedly fold their leaves together at those hours of the afternoon. The *seven-months* coco has already been mentioned; *six-months* is one of the names of poinsettia. During slavery days the biggest holiday of the year—a time of special privileges and unbridled merrymaking—was Christmas. Though considerably moderated today, the tradition lasts, and perhaps it explains the attention paid to this season in the names of *Christmas bush*, *Christmas vine*, *Christmas bean*, *Christmas okra*, *Christmas mango*, *Christmas fish*, and doubtless other things that become prominent at this time.

The sphere in which names are most practical, directly telling their use, is probably that of the herbs. This is not surprising; we find the same in herb lore everywhere. One has but to leaf through Dodoneus or Gerard to find such names as *feverfew* (which drives away fevers), *sneezewort* (a sternutative), *fleabane* (to kill vermin), *hearts-ease* (to medicine an aching heart), *eye-bright*, *all-heal*, *boneset*, and many more. Such herb lore flourishes in Jamaica; *fit-weed* (used against convulsions) has already been mentioned; there are two or three kinds of *strong-back* (to make strengthening tea), at least two kinds of *fresh-cut* (to heal new wounds); *stone-bruise*, *consumption bush*, *asthma bush*, *ringworm weed*, *headache weed*, *chigger-nit weed*, *fever grass*, *Maroon blister*, and so on.

We may add a few of the names that show the derisive, ebullient, or simply broad humour of the folk. Susumber berries, which grow wild everywhere and

are a sort of coarse seasoning for fish or meat, are known as *gully-beans*; one very hot country-pepper is called *devil-damnation* or *burn-to-hell*; a red morel mushroom is *John-crow nose-hole*; and the locust bean, on grounds of shape, colour, and odour is called the *stinking-toe*. A type of mimosa tree whose very numerous dry beans hiss and rattle in the wind, signifying nothing, is called *woman's-tongue*. Consciously exaggerated are the names *stagger-back* (a kind of coconut-and-sugar cake so tough that it makes you stagger back when you bite it), *stamp-and-go* (a kind of codfish fritter that is quickly made), *stop-it-a-pass* (a kind of peppery fish sauce which, when being cooked, must be stopped from passing to the boiling point), *dip-and-come-back* (another fish condiment used to flavour starchy foods).

Finally there is the poetic touch which accounts for a number of names. It has appeared already in *Fancy Anna*, *lift-coat*, and *Shame-lady*, but we may notice also the fish called *Nancy Pretty*, the *butterfly tree*, the *tea bush search-me-heart*, and the mistletoe called *scorn-the-ground*. Not only in names, but in turns of phrase which, if sometimes accidents, are at least happy ones—the Jamaican folk exhibit sharp perception, lively imagination, and a sense of the immanent vitality of earthly things.

It may seem ungracious in the linguist to turn a coldly scrutinizing eye upon these words—like the horrid man in Wordsworth's *A Poet's Epitaph* who would *botanize upon his mother's grave*. Yet something like this he must do; it is his role to find the truth even though it be less exciting, less stirring than what often passes for it. The linguist cannot forget that whatever conscious process may be present in language changes, there is also a large element of the purely mechanical and unconscious. Care must therefore be exercised in seeing *manifestations of the folk mind*; at least, the linguistic situation must be examined before mentalistic interpretations are indulged.

This particularly applies to changes in the forms of words. Each language has a limited number of distinctive sounds, and the tongue can make only these with sureness. Foreign words entering a language are subject to these Procrustean limitations, and will be lopped or stretched until they fit. Even native words, when combined in some ways or when pronounced in the easy modes of every day, undergo abbreviation or other simplification. And this is just as true of folk speech as it is of cultivated speech, for dialects have their own sound-laws and rules of grammar.

If the number of sounds is limited, and the number of possible alterations is limited, and there are already in existence certain meaningful combinations of sounds ("words")—the thing is almost mathematical: many unconscious alterations of words will inevitably *blunder into sense*—that is, they will accidentally coincide with other words. Homonymy is then mistaken for identity, imagination supplying the link: so folk-etymologies come about. When such formations are used as evidence of folk mentality, however, it must be recognized that the rational or conscious part of the process came after the fact; the word had already changed before the *explanation* was discovered. If several variant forms, equally easy to say, are produced—as with *sintle-bible*, *sinkle-bible*, and *single-bible*—then some element of conscious choice may influence the survival of one rather than the others. But we dare not assume a teleology, as if the speaker had consciously aimed

at a meaning, and changed a word to reach it. Our most sobering example is *bitter-damsel*, in which the simplest possible phonetic change opens enormous possibilities of *explanation*—all unfounded.

But if we cast doubt on folk-etymology as a window into the folk mind, there still remain the words of the first and third classes. When a word from the past ceases to have any present meaning, it is on the way to extinction. The continued use of words referring to duppies, obeah, superstitions and so on, do therefore give evidence of the persistence of certain beliefs among the Jamaican peasantry. And, best of all, the fact that a great many new names are constantly being created all over the island, and quite often gaining currency beyond the locality of their origin, gives proof of the poetry, humour, perception and practicality which have been illustrated, and of the mental vigour of the Jamaican folk.

My Life

FRANK MAYHEW



The author is pastor of a Church of the so-called Shouters or Spiritual Baptists. The practice of this cult, which is widespread in Trinidad and St. Vincent, was until recently prohibited, but is now permitted in the former Colony. Apart from an extensive revision of spelling, the introduction of punctuation, and the deletion of one or two repetitions, the manuscript has been printed as written. The illustrations are by Huie of Jamaica.

The Editor asked Mr. Mayhew to write his story and took down the songs from him. We sincerely hope that none will find offence in some of the strange conceptions which find voice in the story, which we commend as moving literature and as a record of genuine experience.

(A.C.P. Ed.)

My name is Frank Aubrey McDonald Mayhew, I was born at Friendship's Tenant, St. Michael, on 30th April, 1884, christened in May by Reverend Clinket at St. Matthews Church. My mother name is Ella Devenish, my father name James Mayhew.

His Infancy

My mother told me when I born that she had no one to take care of me so she had to put me under a tree on a bag to stay and she would come and look at me but when the rain fall she had to leave me at home; then she told me when I begin to creep she put a table in the middle of the house and then measure the length of the string at both doors and tie my foot so I could not fall. She told me when I could eat she get a puppy to stay with me; what I eat, the puppy eat and that was my friend, so that the way I was reared from my birth. Then when I began to walk she put me at a lady call Miss Sobers to take care of me. I can remember

how I used to cry to go there. I can remember how I was bad when I began to grow. When my mother want to get breakfast she had to send me to the shop at night and when she want dinner she had to send me in the morning after tea. I can remember I had a stick call Jackderipper; it had a big head. I put two eyes to it and when I am going out at night I used to carry it with me and every crapaud I see in my way I used to take them and make ball. I was a child never fraid nothing. At night when I am on my way home and the wind blow my neighbour cane I use to say it is spirit. I would take my stick and lick it flat to the ground; if it is a cassava tree I would pull it up. I can remember that when any of my neighbours make me get flog for anything in the day I used to go in the night and pull up whatso they plant. I can remember that I was so bad that my mother had to beat me every day. She beat me till she lick off all the skin I born with; the only part remain was the palm of my hands and the sole of my foot.

His Schooling

By this time I never know what is school because my mother was making children so fast that she could not send me to school, so I had to stay at home when she was at work to cook and wash for the small ones. Mother had her first child when 14 years old. Mother had ten children, I the biggest. You can judge for yourself my state. I remember one day I heard my mother say *O God, my child is fourteen years today and he does not even know A B C. Tomorrow, if I has to cut up my clothes I have to send him to school.* So she came home and cut up one of her bodice and make a shirt for me. Then she had a sofa with a piece of white duck and she rip it off, make a pants for me and put a string in the waist. Think! a boy of fourteen years old at school with a pants on with a string round his waist! How I was look among the boys! How they laugh at me at the time! but I did not mind that, I want to learn. When I reach in the school the school master took me for his pet boy and instead of leaving me in the class he always keep me near the side of him, and as I learn a sum he gave me another and when I had six months I could challenge any boy both in arithmetic and many other subjects.

He Reads the Bible

Then I remember that I began to learn the Bible and a change came into my life. My mother never had to beat me any more. I would do all I had to do without she being talking to me. One day she ask me: *How you made so great a change?* And I say to her *Because I am reading my Bible. Had you taught me the Bible you would never had to beat me so much.* During the time at school I had no time to play. On morning before going to school I had to get up at five o'clock. Six o'clock I had to go and help my mother. She had ten acres of land the estate give her to keep in order as a farm, so I had to help her in the morning before going to school and in the evening as school over I had to make race home to help her. One day when we got holidays from school the school master tell me to come for the two weeks to get lessons and my mother and father gave me a hoe and a basket to go in the field to work. One day I met the master and he say *You vagabond! I tell you to come to school and you rather work.* I began to cry and tell him I has

to do what my mother say. So I went home and told her that I was to go to school one week and work the other. It better I work.

Spiritual Conflict

I remember in my school days I only once had to ask a boy one question. When my school master put on the board: *The word was made flesh and dwell among us* I had to ask what the meaning Christ been born of a woman might be. I was working with a woman who was a Christian and on the Monday she ask me if I does say my praise at night. I say Yes. She ask me what I does say. I told her I does say the Our Father praise. She tell me to hand the Bible to her and when I gave it to her she open John, Ch. VIII, v. 44 and read it to me. It read thus: *Ye are of your father the devil. He is a murderer from the beginning and a liar. He never speak the truth because there is no truth in him, because he is a liar and the father of it.* When I heard these word I say to myself: *That is the reason I always say I am not going to cut the white man cane and after two days I would still go and cut it again because I am led by the devil and has to do as he leads me.* So I make up my mind to change him as my father and to take God as my father. But I did not know how to pray, so I went to bed pondering on what the woman had told me: the devil was my father, a man who hate. It beat me but I did not know how to get rid of him. The same night while I was laying down I felt and see some people operating on me. I see they were cutting my heart and there was finish. I got up from my bed and kneel down on my knees. I utter these words: *Lord save me that the devil be no longer my father* and I then read a chapter in the Bible and a song came in my mouth—

*Precious promise God has given
To the weary passer-by,
All the way from earth to heaven
I will guide thee with mine eyes.*

He Continues to Study

When I went to work at Waterford's Estate the overseer call the woman asking her where I came from and she told him. He say my parent was a beast to put me in the field to work. Then he take me and made me a pantry boy to carry out milk. After, I went home sick and when I return I did not get that work again. Then I start to mind cattle because I had time to study so I got a Testament, and a copy book and at nine o'clock when I put up I used to get under a tree and study. I could not write well so wherever I see a piece of prayer with a writing hand I use to try to take pattern until I could write a letter. I remember one night I was walking in the street, I heard a singing and when I reach, it was a Salvation Army service. I heard the man say that the people who are standing here and does not expect Jesus in the Day of Judgment, these words will stand a witness against them. So I ask him: *So I am responsible for what I hear?* He say Yea so I turn away saying I am not going back to hear anybody preach again.

At nineteen years old I began to preach to all my friends and to tell them that the Lord had save me. Then I went and was baptise among the Brethren at a place they had in the River Road. I got married at twenty years of age. My first child

was a girl. I gave her name Irene Catherine. After I was married I lose my work at Waterford's Estate because myself and the madam could not agree, so she told the husband if he keep me she would leave.

I came to Trinidad in 1905. You must think in a strange land how I had life.

In 1916 I had the first experience about the Shango.¹ One night in my sleep I feel someone sitting on my head, and I heard a singing in my ears, and the singing was this:—

CHORUS: AH A MAN.

VERSE I
fa ra fa ra ye

VERSE II
Sir John fa ra ye

VERSE III
Sir Cath - rine fa - ra ye

[For verses IV, V, VI: Sir John, Sir Michael, St Peter etc.]

And the next morning I ask a woman call Josephine who used to keep Shango dance what the meaning of the singing, and she told me *that is what they call a litany, where they sing and call all the saints one after another*, and she invite me to come to a dance she had and when they sing for Saint Peter in Shango it is:—

Be' Ji Lo. I Bo De'

Be' ji lo i bo de' Be ji lo, i bo de', be' ji'

lo i bo de', be' ji lo, i bo de'

St. Peter came in me and I began to preach, and the next day when they sing for Saint Catherine (name in Shango, *Mama Oyo*) she dance with a hatchet in her hands made out of wood; the next day they sing for Saint Michael who name is Ogun, and they sing for him. He dance with a wooden sword in his hands. One day they had a feast at Pointe-a-Pierre and they tell me to come to it and I told them that I had to go to work, and the next day when I reach where I was going

¹ Shango—a Yoruban cult still practised in the West Indies.

to land the load of wood, the boat got punch so I could not go back to work that day. I went to Pointe-a-Pierre to meet the rest and when I reach, before I could tell them what happen to me, they could tell me that my boat had got damage.

The next night when we were dancing we saw a man came in the yard and he say he want something to eat because he was hungry travelling from Toco and he was looking for work. They gave him some of what they had in the place and he takes it, and there was another man with him and they both did eat. After that he went upstairs and lie down in a woman name Josephine arms, and she call out to him and say *this man is a fast man. He come out from where he come from and lay down in my arms!* and he roll away and went in another woman name Florence bed, and when she came and saw him lying she say, *this long long man come and lie in my bed*, and the man got up and say, *you call me a long long man!* three times and he disappear. We never knew who it was, but when the morning was come a woman came in the yard and told us that she had a dream that a man told her to tell us that the man was there last night was Saint *. I see all these thing for myself.

He struggles for Bread and Salvation and is Baptised a Shouter

One of my disappointment was I had a brother here who could help me, and when I came to him he did not help me so I had to turn to make my own friends. The first job I get I was forty miles from home, but I was glad for it because I had leave my wife and child at home so I had to scramble for some money to send for them. After she came I left that work and for some time could not get anything to do. I went to the Usine factory to work to see after the boilers and before I could make a pay-day the boiler door blew open one morning about four o'clock and caught me afire. My two hands and face was disfigured. I spent two months-in the hospital. At that time there were no Compensation Act for anyone so they only gave me fourteen shillings a fortnight. During this time we had another baby but my wife had to go to work to help keep the house because it was a time before I could use my hands; whensoever I bend my fist the back of my hands use to bleed. After I could work I had to walk four miles morning and the same evening. At the same time there were no conveyance. 1923-24-25 the pay was thirty-five cents a day from nine o'clock to five p.m. I had to leave that and go to work on the sea. I had no time to go to church but before that I used to go to all the churches, Salvation Army, Seven Days, Anglican, Catholic, but I did always praying to God to show me the right one. I did not like the Baptist people because they used to jump and I thought it was a false thing.

One night a man come and dream me and tell me I has to baptise, and I told him I was baptise already and he was pleading with me about half-an-hour and he tell me *if you are going to do it you need not talk, only touch this wall*. I find that I was keeping him back, so I touch the wall, and as I touch the wall it had a long piece of iron in it and it had twelve bolts in it, eleven was taken out and only one remain, and as I touch the wall the whole weight of the iron fell on me and the man told me I has to be responsible for all. In the same dream he told me I has to drink parafin oil before I came for the baptism. So I did so as I had promise in the dream. I went and tell it to some people and they carry me to a pastor call

Cæsar and he baptise me. I did not see but I heard a Mother call Mother Franklin hail that she saw a star in the South and then eleven stars gather round it and she call out, and everyone that was on the river bank began to shout.



He is Called to Build a Church but Ill Fortune Bars Him

After that I had a dream. A man told me that he want me to preach. I reply to him: *You see all the men that preaching seeing so much trouble and you want me to see the same. I can work for my living without preaching. When I begin to preach a penny a day can't mind me. You all right with your preaching.* Again I dream. I saw the form of the church drawn out with the letter E 100² and when I told it to some they say, *it is impossible to build a church.* So best I insist in the order of the spirit. Then they show me: take the top plate, cut it twelve foot six inches, and it will give me one hundred feet. Then I began to ask the question: *O my God, you mean to say you put so great a burden on me to build a church and David had money and you reject him from building? You prefer my back for the burden?* And as I began to build everywhere the people worry me, so I did not intend to worry again. One night I heard a voice in my sleep telling me, *Good Friday.* That was two weeks before Good Friday, 1926, but I did not give any heed. I had decide that after the Easter I was going to look for a spot and begin

² The church as it stands today is a regular octagonal building, with a perimeter of 100 feet, each of the eight sides measuring 12½ feet.

to build. But the week before Good Friday one morning I went to work, but before going something worrying my mind, that I had a wife who had leave me in San Fernando and was living in Port-of-Spain, and she used to come only to draw money. When she come she came the Saturday and I draw \$15 and gave her \$14 and as that was no satisfaction to her I gave her 50 cents out of what I had. I then remain with 50 cents so when I got up in the morning and find myself with that amount I went and buy a quart of bread, coffee and sugar to go out to make a trip of wood in the swamp to get some money in my hands. And when I enter the boat and set sail I heard the clock struck two; the moon was shining bright and I look towards the heaven and call out to God, I say *Oh God, you has not got eyes, you can't see that I had \$15 last night neither eat nor drink a cent and this morn I has not got a cent in my hands. This is a thing that is against me. If you got eye I am asking you to divide the spoil.* I went to work and anchor the boat at the side of the river and began to cut wood. While cutting the wood I was singing and praying all the time. About twelve o'clock more or less I went to make some tea. I drink and then take a walk through the woods. I saw some wood the size of a full grown coconut tree and when I watch them I began to laugh and say *look, money in my hands!* and began to cut them down because that size of wood would give me quick sale, I was sure that at nine o'clock I would have about \$12 in my hand; but sad morning for me! when I had cut an amount I raise the axe in the air to bring it down and I feel someone hold the axe and instead of coming into the wood it came down on my foot. When I look at the right great toe three parts of it was off. I look to the East, North, I thought to run but there was nowhere to run to. It put me in remembrance of the Judgment Morning, that there will be no hiding place. Then I drew out my merino and cut off a piece of the tail to tie the toe, and I saw the next toe to it cut also and the two white strings looking at me. Then I say, *I know I am going to die, the great toe cut and the other also, I am going to bleed to death.*

But God move in a mysterious way: as I was about to go from the spot and make a step the foot went down in the soft mud to the knee. I had to kneel down and take my two hands and raise it up and when I raise it up there was no more bleeding. I gave God the praise for stopping the bleeding, and as the blood stop there was no more fear of death. I still went on singing and praying and while singing I was loading the boat with the wood and in all the pain I brought the boat to a place that someone could take care of it; then I walk and sat down in the middle of the road that whatsoever pass first would take me to the hospital. Why I sat in the middle of the road? If I had sit at the side everything would pass me but when I sit in the midst they could not pass me. I reach the hospital about half past five and no one at home knew that I was there for five days because it was my custom to go out for two or three days. I remain for ten days there. I had a horrible time. The more I pray the more the pain came on me. Then I say, *The Lord has lay his hands upon me and he refused to hear my pray so I am not going to worry him any more.* There was no rest for me day or night, no sleep, neither day or by night. Then I say like Saul, *The Lord has clean gone from me because he refuse to hear my pray.*

Then one night I got a little sleep; I dream I saw they took me to hospital and told the nurse to give me one hour sleep and from that night there was one hour

sleep for me. The sad part of it was when the night come I used to be sorry I had to sleep, for at that hour in the night, in the midst of sleep, someone would come and hold the same sick toe and give it a severe tug and from then I had to be up and around the hospital hopping until day clean. That was my trouble every night until I came home. After I came home it was worst with me. I had pains in the back, in the side, in the stomach. When I turn on either side there was no ease for me, nor sleep, and for one year no sleep came to my eyes until I make up in my mind to take up my work.

His Mission Clearly Revealed

One night I had a dream that I saw a number of people working in the South and they was without water and someone came and give me twelve keys on a bunch and tell me to go and give those people water to drink, and after I had done so they told me to go to the East and when I look to the East I saw a parcel of land cut and clean, waiting for me to plant, so I went and met some men standing and when I ask them what they are waiting for, they told me they are awaiting me to set them to work, so in the dream I went and set them to work. So when I awake in the morning I say I am studying how much money I want to save every week, and the master is laying out his plan for me. I had a boat cost me \$150 and I had owe a man call Mr. Martin some money so I call him and told him to take the boat because I don't know if I will ever return again to work it. I gave away everything save one suit on my back, and a pair of shoes and I take a rice bag and tie it on my back, and a cutlass which I had love and went on my journey not knowing where I was going, and start to hop because the foot was still sick, roaming all through Chaguanas to Tunapuna hungry and thirsty, no money, and when I came to Tunapuna to meet a brother that I had know to rescue me, he had die a month ago, so you can think of my state at that time. There I saw a sister in the faith who I knew at San Fernando and she told me that her house was too small for me to get a lodging and she carry me to a brother. He gave me a lodging in the night, but in the morning when he is going out to work he would shut the door, so I had to walk up and down the whole time and sit under people gallery. By this time the foot was swollen to a size because I had nowhere to rest. All this came upon me because I would not obey the Lord voice. One morning I was more than hungry and I remember a brother call Brown. I say *I am going to his home to get some of his tea*, and I met him sitting in the yard. I never told him I was hungry but he see me, a stranger, sick and a-footed far from my home, and I thought he would give me some of his tea and when his wife call him to take tea he left me and go. When I saw that I got up and went away and sat under a gallery of a Mom who was selling, and while I was there another woman came to buy something and began to speak to me and ask me my whereabouts and I told her *I am a stranger here*, that I was from San Fernando and that I had no where to rest myself during the day, which cause my foot to swell more; and she told me to come with her and she take me home and made provigences for me and allow me to rest there every day until the brother come home. So I say unto her *May the blessing of God ever be with you*, for she saw me a stranger and took me in. I had to leave Tunapuna and never saw her again, but I has promised to be kind to every woman anywhere I go. During this time still I could not help myself. I could not put my hands into my sleeves neither could I go up a step as I want.

His Spiritual Pilgrimage

Then I was sent to a teacher for to point me to Zion School and as she did so I went to Zion Hospital and they attend to me. It is there I got my learning. In Zion School the first thing I learn is the meaning of the word "born again", that is, I saw myself dead and placed in the coffin. I follow my funeral as they carry me to the church, place the corpse at the western door and then they perform the funeral rites. After, I follow my funeral and see that I was bury in China. I number the graves that was there before. There was eleven graves. I made the twelfth travelling south-east in China on the right hand. That was the Thursday. Saturday, while walking, they hand me a baby boy. Then I get to know to be born again you has to be dead and bury and become a child. There I began to walk through the spiritual world. When I reach Calvary I saw the nailing of a man to a cross. The cross was laying on the ground. I saw some men stretch the man hands out on the cross and began to nail it. I raise my hands to cuff the man but I could not. Then I cry out aloud, *Teacher, look, I see they are nailing a man to a cross!* I left there and began to walk. I went in Doption School³ and they start to teach me:—

SHEEP LOS' DE ROAD

For vers. II, III begins: "One o' Moses' sheep etc.", "One o' Joshua's sheep etc."

and that is the first note they taught me in Zion School. Then I began to walk again. I got on a camel and began to sing, and the camel went through the desert with a song, Come to the Jordan Valley. There I had to cross the river. I count the twelve stones that the Israelites step on. Then I say, *if the Israelites passed here that mountain before me is where Moses was buried on*, and I took my flight to the mountain. I say I would like to see where Moses bury and when I reach the top of the mountain I saw where the grave lie and the grave, it hadn't a grass on it yet, clean! the next journey then was going through the valley. Then leaving the valley I went to India and I get an elephant. Then leaving India coming back to Africa I caught myself at the Bay of Biscay. There I get an aeroplane and I launch out with a hymn. Leaving the Bay of Biscay for Africa I had to pass through the drill pasture, then to the drill hall, then to the Holy City, leaving the two Solomon pillars, then from there to the Queen of Sheba home. There I had to set up my telephone, attach it from one part to another, and when I met her I did not know her at first.

3. Doption School—A "doption" is a mode of spiritual experience, taking the form of one of fourteen stereotyped journeys in the spirit world, to each of which a particular type of song is fitting. The teaching of the doptions forms a part of initiation in the "mourning ground".

She send me to get a drink of water for her and when I went in the house I saw everything was gold all over the house and I say, *this is the Queen of Sheba place*. She is a good height woman, well-built, a brown-skin woman, and after giving her the water I left there and later when I return they had a dance and call upon me to bring the children to play music for that dance. Back to Jerusalem and met David in the gate and hear they sing:—

KING DAVID MOURNING

King David mourning for his son Absalom, son Ab-so-lom.

Son Absalom, King David mourning for his son Ab-so-lom: "Oh, Ab-so-lom,

my son!"

leaving there travelling to the north-east of the valley I reach the land of Canaan, and come to a hill where I saw a lot of sheep, some wild, some tame, and they told me how to call them, so I began to sing:—

REPENTANCE GLORY

Sheep, sheep, re-pos-tance, glo-ry: wild sheep to re-

pos-tance glo-ry

After leaving that part of the mountain I reach where I saw Moses and Elijah sitting under a palm tree. Leaving them, I met with old Abraham, and they spread carpet on the steps that was cut out in the mountain for myself and him to walk on, and while he was climbing the mountain the Messiah was playing:—

JOB AND ABRAHAM

Job and Abraham sitting under Kingdom. Playing the band of re-sis-

Job and Abraham sit under Kingdom. See how the angels dance-ing

and after reaching the mountain I take my flight for Celestial and I reach a large place painted in red, and when I ask what that place was they told me that was the Thunder-House. By permission of the gatekeeper I went in the house and see how thunder is like. It is like a big cannon and it is on rails. There are both male and

female thunder. Who knows the difference of the two when they roar? The male thunder roar with a gross voice while the female voice is more clear. Then I went to the Lightning-House and they show me how the lightning is made. A man sat in a wheel chair, and wheresoever he want to flash he press the button and flash it. The lightning is electric. I also see how the rain is operated through a funnel and by a wheel and when the wheel turn, the wind comes through. I also learn that the lightning is male and female, the rainbow also. It appears there is nothing single as far as I see. Returning from there I was going eastward and when I got to a four-cross-road I was on the west side, one man on the south, one to the north, one to the east, and, when I reach, the one to the south took my hands and shake it and hand me to the one on the north and the one on the north hand me to the one on the east and when he took my hands he ask me if I know who he is. I told him *No* and he told me that he was Mr. Moore, the Past Noble Grand and he gave me a pass and a parting shake-hand that I will remember a friend when I am far away. After that I went in a house and they show me a lamp with three burners. They told me, that is the Godhead, with three spirits, wind, water and fire. Then they put on a scale, put a square in my hands, put a compass and square on a stand in front of a looking glass, and tell me to watch it, and when I watch into the glass I saw the needle direct east and they tell me that is to square my life. After that I went in a house at the west door and saw the elders sitting around a table and there was a chair at the east end. They tell me to sit in it and told me, *You are a Past Worthy Father*. This is my knowledge I have in the School of Zion.



Creole—A Folk Language

ÉLODIE JOURDAIN

The author of this article, Mme. Pierre Jourdain, is a translator at the Caribbean Commission headquarters, Kent House, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Mme. Jourdain presented a thesis on Creole as it is found in the West Indies, Louisiana, Mauritius, and Réunion Island to the Faculty of literature of the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in January, 1945, for a doctorate.

THE variety of questions which *Caribbean Quarterly* has dealt with in its two years of existence might lead one to believe that its motto is a slight modification of the famous dictum of Terence's hero "Anything which deals with the Caribbean is my concern". It may not then be out of place to bring to the attention of its readers a linguistic survival which might interest them, that of the hybrid dialects of French origin which in philology come under the heading *Creole*. In Trinidad the word used to denote these dialects is *Patois*, but since they are not to be confused with the French patois, I shall stick to *Creole* as the name of the language which came into being in all the old French possessions in the New World and in the islands of the Indian Ocean through the colonists' need to make themselves understood by the slaves.

We shall not spend much time on the following facts nor attempt a moral judgment of them. It is well known that the discoverers of these new lands, no matter what their nationality, sought in Africa the labour necessary for exploiting them when it was discovered that the indigenous population was unfit for this purpose. We shall consider the language alone and attempt to show how the various dialects came into being.

Something which is not always thought about is the great diversity of languages spoken in countries which do not have a uniform culture. For example the Roman conquest of the Mediterranean basin caused the disappearance of all, or nearly all the native tongues by casting the thought and language of the conquered peoples in the same Latin mould. This is seen in France, where only Basque and bas-Breton remain to give some idea of the language spoken before the conquest of Gaul. This is certainly not the case in Africa, where in spite of European settlement—or shall we say, progressive invasion—all the native tongues have remained alive, and may even be considered numerous when one realises the area which they serve. What then must have been the position three or four centuries ago when, to obtain labour for making their possessions more valuable, the Portuguese, Spanish, English, French and Dutch organised the slave trade. In Africa, the great reservoir of labour, the trade was carried on along the coast from the Gulf of Guinea to Angola. As far as the French colonies were concerned there were two principal centres, the Slave Coast, as it was then called, which is comprised of Togoland, Dahomey and a part of Nigeria, and the Congo. Even today this area is served by a large number of well differentiated languages. Consequently it was difficult for the slaves from different

tribes who found themselves thrown together in a strange land, not only to make themselves understood by their masters, but also to understand one another. Creole came into being through the necessity for a common language between the occupants of land which belonged neither to the white man nor the negro. The inhabitants of these lands before the arrival of the Europeans were of a race as little inclined to bondage as to field labour and destined to disappear rapidly, but not so rapidly that the missionaries had not the time to assimilate their language and give us some idea of it.

Fr. Raymond Breton, one of the first four French missionaries in the Antilles did thus: living with the Caribs in Guadeloupe and Dominica for 18 years, he was able to compile a dictionary which contained a manual of conversational phrases and a grammar of their language. In this work I have found about fifty words which are still used in Martinique. The vocabulary is made up of concrete words: names of plants and animals which have no European counterparts, and place names. It is evident that in each island there must exist words of Amerindian origin, but it remains to be established to which American dialect they belong, and this I am not competent to do. And the question of orthography intervenes, complicating the differences inherent in translation into English and French. Fortunately however, I am able to escape that difficulty for the vocabulary of Carib origin is negligible and the Carib grammar, having had little effect on Creole, may be omitted in a study of the latter. There remained, therefore, the negro and the white man, the latter having the dire need to be understood by the former, and as quickly as possible. The master therefore taught only the simplest of things and in the simplest language possible. To get some idea of what happened, one need only observe the method used between foreigners, which is to reduce the phrase to its indispensable parts, these being the noun, or subject-pronoun, the verb in its infinitive form, and the complements in the order in which they are most easily grasped: *Vous prendre chemin église-tourner à droite, &c.* This is what is still known in France as speaking *petite nègre*, but this is not Creole, it is only its origin. Creole such as has been evolved in all the French possessions is quite another thing, and all who have studied it have discovered that it has not only its own local colour but also its own fine points.

By and large the various Creoles can be divided into two geographically determined groups: the American group and that of the islands of the Indian Ocean. In spite of resemblances which show that phonetically all the Creoles have obeyed the same rules, we can say that the American group interests us more directly, and that our cursory study will be limited thereto. It is of enough importance in itself, since four varieties which resemble one another closely but are nevertheless distinct can be recognised. There are the Creole of Louisiana, that of Haiti, that of French Guiana and that of the Lesser Antilles. In the last group, Guadeloupe offers a slight peculiarity in the use of the possessive case, where the complement is joined to the possessive noun by the preposition "à", whereas in the other islands this case is not denoted by any preposition. This peculiarity of language tends to substantiate what can be recognised elsewhere, that it is the Creole of Martinique which has been carried to St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica and Trinidad and which has remained more or less intact in those islands which have become British. The Creole of Martinique is therefore of particular interest to readers of *Caribbean Quarterly*. We shall rely on it in our study of the syntactical formation of the Creole of the Lesser Antilles.

If as we have said above, the syntax was reduced to a minimum by the white man who was anxious only to get the most out of his servants, and if at the same time the abstract vocabulary is singularly poor, it is not the same with the vocabulary of concrete words. Without being over rich, the Creole vocabulary is ample, and its medley offers the philologist many happy discoveries. The colonists came from all the provinces of France (and a list of their surnames would be sufficient to prove this); but it was the coastal regions which provided the first settlers. These came from various social levels. Along with *younger sons*, the majority of whom were sailors or soldiers, or colonists themselves, there were the artisans, those whom we call today skilled workmen and finally, the *trente-six mois* or white indentured labourers who, unable to stand their own expenses, engaged to serve for three years the colonists who paid their passages, to the Antilles. At the end of their contract, they themselves became colonists or returned home.

Normandy was the chief of these coastal regions which supplied the Antilles during most of the colonising period, and the fact that Creole is still spoken there is proof of this. Among the dialect words which are extant in the French Antilles, Norman words are the most numerous. Some Provençal is also to be found: words such as *cani*, *poban*, &c. Finally trade between them and changes in the nationality of their *possessors* sometimes made a new language necessary in the islands. This was the case in Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Grenada and Tobago where English was substituted for French. Trinidad is the strangest case of all, for this island was never French and the fact that Creole is spoken there today in certain parts of the island bears witness only to that time when the French colonists brought there by the Spanish possessors had to make use of its lowly off-spring Creole along with their own language. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Trinidadian patois has retained some Spanish words, although these are more or less distorted. Thus we have *lagoisi* for *l'alguazil*, *escalin*; *la gnape*, &c. In Martinique we find English words such as *dead*, *saibote* meaning side-board, *chasspagne* meaning saucapan, &c., since this island was twice or three times occupied by the British for reasonably long periods,

But all these borrowings did not occur simultaneously. First, as I have said above, there were two elements present, the white man and the black. But how is one to be sure that the latter adopted at the outset all that the former wished to teach him? One can imagine meetings between men of the same tribe and secret bonds which their language created between them, allowing them to escape, if only for a little time, the constant control exercised over their actions. Then one may certainly hold that, in the beginning at least, an African vocabulary must have been added to the French vocabulary and to those Carib words which everyone used to designate native plants, fruits, animals, and articles of everyday use. But it is difficult to discover with any degree of certainty the origin of these African words, for they have certainly been distorted phonetically by the West Indian descendants of the original Dahomeans and Congos. I have personally been able to check on this by submitting to two young Africans all the words which I could not identify as being of European or Carib origin. One of these young men is the grandson of the last king of Dahomey, Behanzin, speaking Fon, and the other is from Togoland, and speaks Ewe. They were able, in spite of the distortions which the words have suffered, to resolve certain enigmas, but not all, which makes it possible that some

of the incomprehensible words may belong to another African tongue. Be that as it may, in Martinique this African vocabulary is hardly greater than the Carib.

But in a language one does not have only the vocabulary to consider, there is also syntax, which in certain cases may not be of the same origin as the vocabulary. For example, this is the case with Rumanian, which, as far as syntax is concerned, is considered a Latin language, though its vocabulary is for the greatest part Slavonic.

Beginning with the fact that languages are classed according to their syntax and not their vocabulary a Haitian author states that "Creole" since it obeys an African syntax, should be considered as belonging to the Ewe linguistic group. Although we know that it is in Africa that we must seek certain elements of the Creole grammar, and particularly the auxiliaries used in conversation, I would not dare be so peremptory, for my knowledge of the African tongues does not permit me to settle the question so easily. It is certain that in the two French departments of the Antilles with which I am familiar, Martinique and Guadeloupe, Creole tends to incorporate, little by little, the elements of French syntax which is taught in the schools. Consequently, to have some exact idea as to what this dialect was before the compulsory teaching of French was able to modify it, it would be better to study some old Creole texts which are available in these two islands, or preferably to study the dialect in certain islands which, since they have become English, have been able to keep intact the syntactical usage of the 17th and 18th Centuries. In this respect Trinidad offers an interesting field for research. Having the good fortune of two years stay there, I was able to note the ways in which the Creole spoken there differed from that of Martinique, which has had of necessity a greater opportunity to approximate to French.

Only the initiated are aware of the existence of the Creole Grammar compiled almost a century ago by a Trinidadian, Mr. J. J. Thomas, and published in 1869. It is a conscientious piece of work and its author has the rare merit of treating seriously a question which is both interesting and important, although few people realised this. At that time, philological studies and moreover phonetics were less scientific than now, since it seemed that dialects such as Papiamentu and Pidgin-English were unworthy of the grammarians' labour. Mr. Thomas is therefore to be complimented for recognising the interest provided by the passage of a language as well constructed as 17th century French, into a distorted but living language which obeys its own laws. I would like to say here however that he does not appear always to have perceived the reasons underlying the phenomena he points out. In phonetics particularly his work would not be of great use to anyone who wished to make a thorough study of Creole. It is too difficult to attempt to prove this here for it would entail the citing of numerous examples and the drawing up of a list of those rules which, it seems to me, have escaped him. From the point of view of syntax, his work seems to rest on more solid foundations, and, I think, reflects modes of speech current a century ago which the population still makes use of. The modes of speech differ little from those which were then current in Martinique and which one finds in the contes, fables and songs preserved in written form by colonists who loved their island and everything about it. With this in mind one might compare those burlesques in Creole, after the fashion of the fables of La Fontaine, by one "Vieux Commandeur" (a pseudonym which concealed the identity of a high official of the time, M. Marbot.) with the proverbs and examples cited by Mr. Thomas

in his grammar. It will be seen that the vocabulary is almost the same and that the most striking difference in syntax is that which marks the possessive pronoun. I cannot state categorically, however, that the Trinidadian form of this pronoun did not exist at some other time in Martinique for I do not have Marbot's "Les Bambous" on hand. The possessive pronoun in Martiniquan Creole is *ta moin*, *ta ou*, *ta li* (often reduced to *ta i*), *ta nous*, *ta zautes*, *ta yo*. One sees immediately that this form is a reduction of the French phrase *c'est à moi* with the phonetic liaison of *t* and *a*. In Trinidadian Creole the form given by Thomas which is still extant is *celà moin*, *celà ou*, *celà li*, *celà nous*, *celà zautes*, *celà yo* which is without doubt a contraction of *cela à moi* or some other phrase where the phonetic liaison *ta*, mentioned above, is absent. Putting aside this slight difference, and it is not yet quite definite that Martinique never had that form, one might say that 100 or 150 years ago the languages were identical. What are the changes which they have undergone? To sense them one must be on the lookout for them. First from the point of view of accent, the difference is that in Trinidad the delivery is slower and the articulation is further away from French. In the vocabulary it is evident that the introduction of English words occurs more often in Trinidad and that the Trinidadian patois has more faithfully retained truly Creole words which the Martiniquan has lost; but at the same time the syntax of the French Antilles benefits from French. Moreover there exists in both languages as in all living languages, a disposition to create new words, a sort of slang which changes continually. On this point one notices several slight divergences between the two languages. But putting that aside, the two Creoles are so much alike that a Martiniquan has little difficulty in making himself perfectly understood in Trinidad and he finds a certain pleasure in hearing a Trinidadian speak what appears to recall memories of the language of another day. On the whole less striking but comparable is the case of the Norman who disembarks at Quebec and finds there the accent of his great grandfather and grandmother. Whatever traces of Carib, African or other foreign words there may be in vocabulary it cannot be denied that the construction of phrases is French and it is difficult to say, as Mlle. Sylvain has done of the Creole of Haiti, that its syntax derives from the African tongues.

Of what value is this dialect, such as it is, as a vehicle for thought or as an artistic instrument? In other words, can Creole claim to be a literary language?

The first question which is posed is that of orthography and it is not easily answered. Should one profit from the quasi-exceptional opportunity of representing in written characters the exact sounds of this language which is almost entirely oral? If this is done the benefit of its being derived from French will be lost, and reading would be made difficult, at least for all those (and there are many) who have not been taught to read the phonetic alphabet. At a time when there was no question of the use of phonetics, this problem was resolved in a different fashion by those who tackled it. Generally speaking they were the white colonists, familiar from infancy with Creole and knowing all its fine points, or crews of ships who, amused that this language was pleasing although infantile, wished to remember it. Without exception they all sought to retain the French orthography, or at least conformed to hereditary customs in rendering the sounds. For example the sound *o* was written *eau* or *au*. M. de Saint Quentin alone in studying the Creole of French Guiana has bravely adopted phonetic representation. The question is of importance,

and has for a long time held the attention of the Government of Haiti, which wished to get rid of illiteracy. The official language of the country is French, but the whole of the peasant population speaks Creole. It was thought that children would learn to read more quickly if instead of being taught to read French they were taught to read in Creole. An American mission of experts came to this conclusion and advised the adoption of a phonetic spelling; but professors and other Haitian authorities have judged that if this solution is adopted, it will be more difficult later on to teach the children the orthography of French, their official language. But let us suppose this problem resolved. What then are the qualities which Creole can offer?

It can be stated that it is very expressive, using a large number of exact images, that it is quite musical, for rhythm and intonation play an important part in it, and it cannot be denied that these two important qualities are a direct heritage of Africa where certain tongues are made up of monosyllabic roots which have different meanings according to the intonation they are given. But if this concrete vocabulary is sufficiently rich and picturesque, bringing together words of very diverse origin: English, Spanish, Carib, African not to mention words of French dialect, trade words (notably marine), one cannot say the same of the abstract vocabulary, which is almost non-existent. It is evident that with progress in primary education this vocabulary has the chance of infiltrating little by little into Creole. But these would only be words adopted from French, and not truly Creole formations.

I have found an example of what I am stating when studying certain reasonably old texts. For expressing simple feelings such as love, grief at the loss of a friend or having to leave one's country, or when satirizing or ridiculing a person, as in the satirical songs of Carnival, the use of Creole reaches perfection by virtue of its poetic quality of speaking directly through images and its peculiar humour which is as inimitable as it is untranslatable.

For example a Frenchman who knew English well would not understand all the reasons that make an Englishman, a Scotsman and above all, an American burst out laughing at a page of cartoons. In the same way, I imagine that that which amuses the French does not always amuse the foreigner. But I am certain that Creole humour escapes Europeans unless they have lived long enough in the Antilles for their nationality not to matter. An English Trinidadian who knows Creole perfectly, like Mr. Fortuné for example, is sure to lose nothing of the Guadeloupian humour of M. de Chambertrand, or the Martiniquan humour of M. Gratiant, for it is not a matter of French or English but simply the same Creole humour, practical joking in the guise of bonhomie, the same simulated naïveté and finally that something which the readers of *Caribbean Quarterly* know only too well but which is, however, difficult to express.

In citing authors who have used Creole as a means of expression, I would like to assert without hesitation that Creole does have poetic and satirical qualities; but is literature no more than this? In a word, is folk literature real literature? Can one truly speak of literary works, in describing tales, contes, songs and short poems, in a word, folk literature? The answer may be supplied by the other works of these authors who amuse themselves by writing Creole. Talented poets, M. de Chambertrand, and M. Gratiant, like any number of Martiniquans, Guadeloupians or Haitians, make a point of writing in French, and their works have greater significance, since they have at their disposal the riches of the language

of a great civilization which for centuries has been capable of expressing all shades of thought and all human knowledge. To compete in the field of literature with true languages, such as English or French, Creole would have to create a suitable vocabulary, something which cannot be realised, since it is surrounded in all the old French possessions by English, and in those departments which are our oldest colonies by French itself. It is therefore likely to lose itself in one of these two languages if it risks adopting their abstract vocabulary, or to say the same thing more simply, it will disappear with the progress of education. This may take a long time even in the French Antilles, where the young generation have more and more to learn to speak French correctly.

As for Trinidad, apart from some linguistic islands scattered here and there, she has totally forgotten the easy language which has served as interpreter between peoples of very diverse races, Negroes, East Indians, Chinese, a linguistic phenomenon which I myself noticed a little before the first World War. Trinidadians have not altogether given up Patois, and some embarrassment in the use of English has only to be noted for one to discover immediately that the speaker smilingly offers to remedy that by speaking Patois to you. The author of this article wishes to take this opportunity to thank publicly all those who in coming to her aid have given her the pleasure of stating that even in its lowly form of Creole, the memory of the French tongue remains alive in an island which has never belonged to France.

(Translated by Cecil Herbert)

while carriacou . . .



Carriacou is a sunny windy island lying in the Grenadines between St. Vincent and Grenada, its anchorages protected by coral reefs like the one marked by a line of surf in the picture above. . . . And the ruined tower was once a windmill for grinding cane in the days when sugar, grown on large estates, was the island's main crop.

. . .

Most of the land which was once estates now belongs to peasant families, owning 4-5 acres each, cultivating corn and cotton, and raising stock. The picture opposite shows the houses of the people . . . and the dryness of the soil. It also shows two of a party of seven visitors from Trinidad who went to Carriacou to study its traditional music and dancing in August, 1952.

. . .



makes music . . .



The picture above shows a "Bass and Tambourine Band", consisting of fiddle, drum, tambourine and triangle. This band plays quadrilles, reels and meringues, to which have been set words of local significance, in Creole. Bands similar to this are still to be found in most parts of the West Indies, and it was not this type of music and dance which attracted the extra-mural study excursion but . . .

. . .

the "Big Drum Dance". Opposite is Sugar Adams, the leading drummer of the island, "beating goatskin". Accompanied by two other drums, he would play the whole night through, and the people would dance in a style which has come down to them through generations.

. . .



and dances . . .



At a Big Drum Dance you can see as many as 25 different dances, of three main types. There are archaic African dances, carrying the names of some of the "nations" of West Africa — Ibo, Cromantee, Temnee and others. The illustration shows the Arrada nation dance, done to a slow 6/8 beat, with antiphonic singing in the Pentatonic mode.

The second type are Old Creole dances, carrying names like Bongo and Hallecord, and they appear to have reached their present form in the West Indies. They are danced with grace and verve, usually by two women. In this picture one of the dancers is sucking a pipe, almost out of the picture . . . and smoking a cigarette while he writes notes is J. D. Elder, one of our party.



The third type of dance we can call New Creole, and it is marked by strong European influence. Grand Belè, the dance illustrated, is for two couples, and runs through a series of figures after the manner of the Quadrille, to a fast exhilarating eight-in-the-bar beat.

we study . . .



Percy Borde is one of the leading dancers of the Little Carib Dance Group in Trinidad. After watching the old experts dance, he entered the ring to show what he had learnt. Spectators' faces show what they are thinking.

The purpose of our trip was to study the music and dances of the Big Drum Dance of the people of Carriacou. We noted over 150 songs with their words, often enigmatic, and learnt at least some of the dances. We propose to return this year to carry our studies further . . .



. . . before the old heads go to their resting places.

Photographs by Eugene Beard



. . . before the young forsake the old tunes for the latest hits.

Notes by Andrew Pearse

AFRICAN SETTLEMENTS IN BELMONT VALLEY ROAD AROUND 1890



THE PLAN

Map of Belmont Valley Road showing the Rada Compound, and the distribution of African families around 1890 from data obtained from Henry Antoine.

Sketch of the Rada Compound at Belmont Valley Road indicating the positions of buildings, shrines and private cemetery : (A) Main House; (B) The Convent; (c) Residence of the Head of the Compound; (D) The last building erected. See Reference for further details.

A Rada Community in Trinidad

ANDREW T. CARR

Photographs by Eugene Beard

At the north-eastern corner of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Belmont Valley Road runs between two verdant ridges and trails its way in an easterly direction to the perimeter of the Town and into the hills beyond. Today it serves an over-built area with the congestion of houses peculiar to outskirts into which the poorer classes, through pressure of circumstances, have been driven to find living space. Forty years ago there was greater evidence of poverty ; there were smaller and fewer houses with hardly any fences around them, and a kindly neighbourliness. This pattern of life was even more emphasized in the earlier years around 1870 when groups of Africans and their descendants were almost the only settlers in the area, comprising Rada, Ibo, Congo and Mandingo peoples. The community of Mandingoes, including some ex-soldiers and their families, lived half a mile away on the hillside outside the boundary of the Town.

In this general setting lived a people whose means of livelihood was in the main agriculture with a sprinkling of the trades, mostly carpentry. Their centre of social activity lay about a quarter of a mile along the Valley Road, and about forty yards from the boundary of the Town. It was, and still is, a Compound¹ where the leading group of Africans and their descendants met to follow the religious cult of their forefathers.

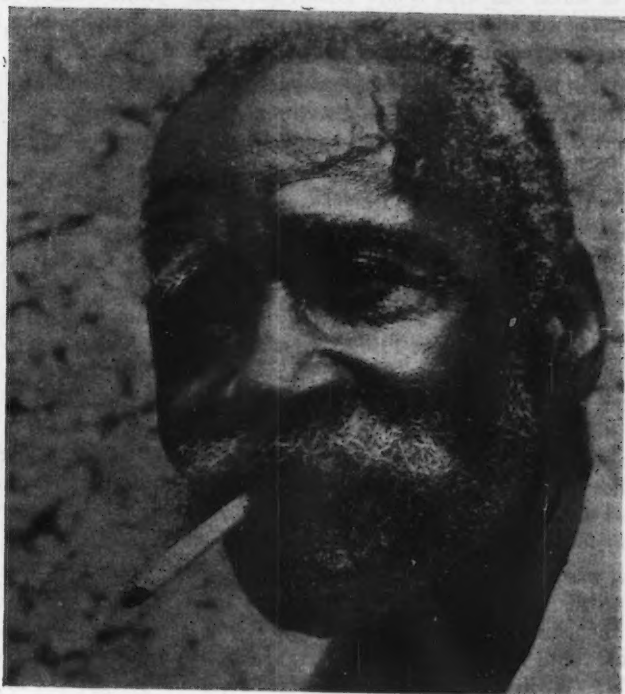
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1. Ever since my childhood days I have had the privilege of fairly close association with the Rada group under review. My maternal grandmother was of Mandingo parentage, and the Rook family to which she belonged owned property in the hills of Belmont (now north-east Port-of-Spain, Trinidad), and also the Mandingo parcel of land shown on the chart near the entrance to the Valley Road. Behamie Lane which runs through it was named to commemorate my grandparents, whose people were old settlers, my grandmother having been born in the area in 1844. As a boy, I frequently accompanied her to the compound on ceremonial occasions, for although she was not intimately connected with the rites, she was held in high regard by the community.

All the people associated with the compound were Roman Catholics by religious persuasion. They nevertheless did not and could not be expected to break away entirely from the culture and traditions of their forbears. This condition still prevails subject, however, to the gradual changes which time inexorably brings.

This has no pretensions to being a comprehensive study. Mainly descriptive, it is an attempt to record one aspect of the Island's colourful folk-lore which is little studied, thereby laying a foundation for further study and amplification.

I am much indebted to Mr. Henry Antoine, the present head of the Compound, for information concerning his father, its founder ; for details on the distribution of families as shown on the chart, as he remembered them as a youth, and for much valuable information ; also to Mr. Andrew George, and his wife who is co-head of the Compound, for the readiness with which they put their knowledge at my disposal.

THE FOUNDER AND HIS BACKGROUND



Henry Antoine, present head of the Rada Compound, Belmont Valley Road; Huto or Father of the Drums.

The founder of the Compound was Abojevi Zāhwenu,² who in Trinidad adopted the French name of Robert Antoine, and was more popularly known as Papa Nanee. He was a Rada—the term used to denote a native of the French West African Protectorate of Dahomey. According to Prof. Herskovits, the term itself derives from Allada, an early capital of the Dahomean Kingdom. The old

2. The orthography is adopted in part from Dr. Geoffrey Parrinder's note on the subject in his thesis "West African Religion", which was itself adopted in simplified form from the Practical Orthography of African Languages (revised edition 1930), published by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.

g is always hard.

x represents the German ach sound, the Scottish ch as in loch. It has been used in Xevioso. In x'rra and x'rrē it is otherwise attempted thus: h'rra and h'rrē, for the sake of simplicity.

j, dj, is voiced as j in judge.

y is consonantal as in "you".

a, e, i, o, u, have the Italian values.

ε is used for the open e, as in "met".

o is used for the open o, as "au" in author.

Nasalized vowels are represented by the sign ~ placed over the vowel letter, thus Ogū instead of the French rendering Ogoun, but in some cases the "n" has been retained, as in vodūnsi (French: vodoungsi). Such an "n" is not pronounced after the nasalized vowel. Tones are not marked.

Kingdom was built up by conquest, and in 1724 it embraced the Kingdom of Ardra, the capital of which was what is now known as Allada. Ardra itself seems to have enjoyed some power and prestige, for it is recorded³ that an ambassador from that Kingdom was received at the Court of King Louis XIV in 1670.

Abojevi was born in Hweda⁴ in Dahomey about the year 1800 and was a child when wicked King Adanzan⁵ sat on the throne, having usurped power from his minor brother Ghezo who was named to succeed to the kingship.

He was a youth of about 18 years when Ghezo ascended the throne; he saw service under this monarch in the Dahomean Army, and narrowly escaped death or capture when his people raided the Adja territory to the north-west.

It is said that very many years after the abolition of negro slavery in the West Indies in 1833 and the abolition of the apprenticeship system which followed it in 1838, Abojevi was among the last group of African immigrants who came to settle in Trinidad. About 5 ft. 10 ins. in height and well built, he arrived here a full-grown man leaving a wife and children in Dahomey. This group arrived shortly after the great Cholera epidemic which swept the island in 1854. It is presumed therefore, that he came about 1855 at the approximate age of 55. He worked for some time on an estate near Champ Fleurs by the town of St. Joseph about 6 miles from the city, and after this period he took up residence in Belmont Valley Road some distance farther up the valley from the site of the compound he subsequently founded.

Abojevi was not a hubonō, or member of the priestly caste. He was a bokonō or diviner in his native land and practised the art of reading the future in the manner of the astrologer. He was held in great respect by those around him, and was credited with a great store of knowledge concerning herbs and things supernatural.⁶ Abojevi was sometimes referred to as Dokpwegā, who in his native land is the officiating head of a group in the community having to do with burial ceremonies and funeral rites.

THE OLD COMPOUND

In the year 1868 Abojevi acquired from a builder, Abraham Benjamin Warner, a parcel of land in the Valley Road about 3/5ths of an acre in size. Belmont was then in the district of Laventille and for \$135.00 the land was conveyed to him.⁷ On this site he proceeded to form his compound. He had again entered domestic life with a reputed wife, and was father of a son. Being born in Whydah where serpent worship is a strongly established cult, he was devoted to the worship of

3. Melville J. Herskovits: *Dahomey* Vol. 1, p. 5 with reference to Edouard Foà (pp. 269-270) from whom the record was taken.

4. Presumably the surviving pronunciation here of Whydah or Ouidah. Captured by Dahomey in 1726, (Herskovits: *Dahomey* Vol. 1, p. 5), the City became its most important seaport.

5. Abojevi spoke to his children of this monarch as Adādozā, whom as a child, he knew.

6. "A bokonō is a student, a man learned in Dahomean culture and possessing a specialized body of knowledge concerning the supernatural."
M. J. Herskovits: *Dahomey*. Vol. 2, p. 214.

7. The land consisting of 36,138 superficial feet was conveyed under a deed dated 13th July, 1868, and registered as No. 423 of 1868 at the Port-of-Spain Registry.

the deity Dangbwe (Serpent God)⁸ who was his patron saint and after whom his compound took its name as the Dangbwe Comme (House or place of Dangbwe) in contradistinction to the Sakpata Comme of another Rada community situated a couple of miles to the south-east.



Sakpata kwe

The compound began with one house built on the land to accommodate the small family; a chapel or vodunkwe (house of the gods), and a tent or covered shed adjoining the house on its southern side, and facing the road. Here dancing to the drums took place. In addition to the recognition given to Dangbwe, two shrines were erected which, according to Dahomean lore, are compulsory no matter which group of gods is worshipped, be they of the Sky, Earth, or Thunder group. One of the shrines, customarily at the entrance of the compound, was to *Σlegba*, who is regarded as the devil, but is also a guardian against evil. In keeping with the Dahomean pattern, there was at this shrine in the early days, an effigy of the deity in clay—small, ugly, and complete with disproportionate phallus. The other was

to *Ogū*, god of iron, and a deity enjoying a very high place in the African pantheon. After the lapse of a few years, *Abojevi*, having a great love for the Sakpata or Earth group of gods, sought and obtained the permission of the *Big People*—as the gods are called by the Rada—to instal a shrine to these deities. With him had come from Africa *Padonu*, a trained *hubonō* or high priest, and two male *vodūnsi*,⁹ *Alokasu* and *Kunu*, and these men took their respective places in the ceremonial activities of the compound. The compound flourished for many years with a vibrancy and fervour glimpses of which survive in many a tale which a few of the oldest devotees can still recall, but which are almost unknown to the present generation and may entirely disappear with the next. Remembered today as *Papa Nanee*, the founder has left behind him a reputation as a great and selfless medicine man, but

8. M. J. Herakovits : *Dahomey*. Vol. I, p. 182 relating to Sib Organisation of Dahomey : Dangbevi Hwedanu (Serpent-children Peda-people). "The members of the Sib are today found principally in the region of Whydah. Their *tohwiyō* (as the ancestor held to be the founder of each sib is called) is the dangbe serpent."

Dahomey. Vol. II, p. 248. "Dangbe, then is the supernatural parent of the founder of a Dahomean sib which has the City of Whydah as its primary locale."

9. *Vodūnsi* : wife of the god—a dancer who enters into a state of possession by the deity. Could be male or female.

in his time his wisdom and kindness, and his service to his people made his name a household word among them. Death came to the founder in July of 1899 at the approximate age of 99¹⁰, but the doctor who tended him before his death gave a suggested age of 108 years. He was buried in the private burial ground which occupies about two lots of land on the rear eastern boundary of the compound. He left a widow and twelve children, and another six, of whom he was the putative father, but who did not live at the compound. After Abojevi's death his other property was sold, but the house standing upon it was removed to the present site and set up for the use of the eldest daughter. About the year 1903 his son Dewendo built his home at its south-eastern end, and some years after, the eldest son Hodonu erected his near to the main house. For many years before the death of the old man many Rada families settled in the area, and during the ceremonial occasions of those early days it is said that so large were the gatherings at the compound that there was hardly room in which to accommodate the people.

THE COMPOUND TODAY

Poverty and privation have had their effects upon the compound during the eighty-five years of its existence. The original house now containing four rooms instead of six, holds a grandson and his family of five, and his ailing brother. The second house in the compound, erected soon after the death of the founder for his eldest daughter, contains two rooms. Today, it is called the *Convent* and affords temporary accommodation to the dancers when occasion arises. Dewendo's house was entirely rebuilt in 1942. In the small fourth building which was put up by the eldest son, and deceased father of fourteen children, now live two of his daughters, and a son of one of them.

Aged seventy-five, Dewendo is head of the compound and sharing the duties of this office with him is his niece, who lives with her husband a short distance away. He has been head drummer for twenty-seven years, having been ordained by special ceremony in 1926 to that position of *hũto* or father of the drums. He is the fourth member to succeed to this post since his father founded the compound in 1868, the line of succession being \sum zisũ, Gangwede, Hodonu and Dewendo. He is the father of ten children, seven of whom are alive, and grandfather of twenty-two. With him and his wife live two children, a daughter-in-law and nine grandchildren. His second son Sedley, a young man of serious mien, inherited the position of *hubonũ* or high priest in 1948. He also is fourth in line since 1868, those before him being Padonu, Achovi, and Soobo.

The occupiers of the compound have been prolific in progeny, but not all have lived on the site. In relation to the founder there have been over the years since 1868, eighteen children, about fifty grandchildren and over seventy great grandchildren.

The private cemetery situated at the back portion of the compound is used to this day, the last burial having occurred in 1952. It is said that the original owner of the land was buried here. No records are available to indicate the date of its registration and the earliest record to hand included it in a list of private

10. This age was arrived at by computation with the help of the only surviving son Dewendo
—Henry Antoine.

cemeteries published as Legislative Council Paper No. 119 of 1903. It receives noticeably good care and contains at the present day many well kept surface graves. About 65 burials have taken place there to date, twelve of which have been of children.

Adjoining the cemetery and occupying the other and western end of the back portion of the land is a more or less thickly wooded area with a large variety of fruit trees. Many years ago there was here a small spring which has long since ceased to flow. Seven years after Abojevi's death the property was forfeit to the Crown for non-payment of taxes, but his widow moved in the matter and a re-grant was effected in her favour in 1908.¹¹ To this day there are neither walls nor fences surrounding or dividing the property but it may soon lose its character as an open compound and be divided into units to satisfy those who have inherited parts of it. No longer does the *Σlegba* shrine exist as earth mound and effigy. The impact of western ideas, and misunderstanding by a growing population alien to African customs have been responsible for its disappearance from the scene. Today, it is merely a spot at the entrance with its position marked by a stone in the ground. The shrines of *Ogū* and *Sakpata* are there in their original positions freshened by the re-building of the earth mounds, each about one foot in height and about three feet square. Both stand uncovered and in the open as they always did, that to *Ogū* being under African lore never covered. In the old days, according to African custom, a euphorbia plant stood at the head of the *Sakpata* kwe or shrine. Some years ago the milky fluid of the plant got into the eyes of a child with harmful effects, and it was replaced by a dragon-blood plant (*Dracaena* species). The dances now take place near the shrines, in an open shed about sixteen feet by twelve feet, covered with galvanized iron, with a semi-circular fence obstructing the view from the road. The *vodūnkwe* or house of the gods, nearly always referred to as the *chapelle*, still stands near and opposite to the northern part of the main house. A small house about thirteen feet long and ten feet wide, it is divided into two sections. Drums, accoutrements and symbols are stored in the back portion, and an altar stands at the western end of the front room upon which are sacred objects—crucifix and statuettes of Christian saints. On the ground at the foot of the altar are the scared goblets, plates for offerings of food at sacrificial ceremonies, and a dish with thunderstones—*sosiyovi*—(neolithic celts recognised here as Carib or Arawak stone implements). Pictures of Christian saints adorn its walls. Two benches provide seating accommodation and its two doors, on the east and south sides, are covered by light curtains. *Azān*,¹² a sparse girdle of palm fronds, hangs over the doors on ceremonial occasions as a spiritual guard against evil; it is also to be seen at the shrines and over the entrance to the dancing place. If something occurs to annoy and anger a deity, *azān* may be put about his shoulders to induce a calmness of spirit.

Time has served to bring about a change also in the names of the descendants, indicating a moving away from the old tradition. The children of former times

11. The re-grant to Eleanor Robert Antoine was made on 8th February 1907, and registered on 24th March 1908, as No. 809 of 1908 at the Port-of-Spain Registry.

12. M. J. Herskovits : *Dahomey* Vol. 1, p. 214. "The function of the *azān*, in Dahomey as in all West Africa, is to act as a supernatural prophylaxis against evil reaching a sacred place."

were popularly known by their African names: Hodonu, Sedande, Soobo, Wovönde Yewenu, Boko, whilst their children are called by such names as Anthony, Dennis, Sedley, Evelyn, Hilda and the like.

RELIGION

In spite of the impact of western culture and religion over so many years, the community has retained as a living force a large measure of ancestral religious beliefs and rites, distinguished by a high degree of reserve and control, the absence of abandon and sensationalism, and a deep respect for the significance of the rites and ceremonies. There is a high moral code which follows the pattern common to most religions in emphasizing the virtues of goodness in thought and deed. Forgiveness is accepted as a practical philosophy rewarding with spiritual grace those who practise it, while evil-doing is considered in the long run to do more harm to its perpetrator. In recent conversation with an old member of the compound he wound up our talk with these words: *If you walk with the saints you never fall—all you need is a good heart.* The gods ("saints") are closely connected with the immediacy of life and are consulted constantly in matters of ill-health and mundane troubles of every kind, with a deep-seated belief in the efficacy of their guidance and the force of their influence. Such communion is believed to take place through the medium of the possessed devotee. Christianity is accepted and practised in conjunction with the recognition given to the African deities, so that it has come to pass, through the interesting evolutionary process of syncretism¹³ that the African gods have with few exceptions their Christian saintly counterparts and are so regarded in this dual aspect. The question put to an old member of the compound: *How did the African saints come to acquire their Christian names?* brought forth the reply: *It was always so.* But I asked, *did not early missionaries in Africa introduce the teachings of Christianity, and translate them into the African languages, so that the Africans themselves, apart from the missionaries, may have formed associations in an effort to reconcile the two beliefs?* No, he replied, *we had Christianity before the missionaries came. It was always so. It is the same thing.* I find this an interesting comment, indicating, it would appear, an absence of conflict in fundamental religious principles.

It is said that Dr. Aggrey *always thought of God as Father-Mother, or rather Mother-Father*¹⁴ and this is how those Dahomeans see it who look upon Mawu-Lisa (Mother-Father) as the Creator. The Rada community under study know Mawu-Lisa, but only as the cardinal points east and west (beginning with a mystic east) which, according to the mythology surrounding these deities, correspond to their spheres of rule. For them—east, west, north and south are: Mawu-Lisa—Hwehū-Hwese. Their name for the Creator is Dada Segbo, who is the Supreme Being for Dahomeans who worship the Earth pantheon or Sakpata group of gods.

13. M. J. & F. S. Herskovits: *Trinidad Village* p. 330 (Pub. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.). . . .

"The phenomenon . . . is the one called syncretism, observed and reported upon from many parts of the New World, where Africans have translated their aboriginal religious structure into the patterns of worship of their new environment. Such renderings of belief and worship have proved both simplest and most felicitous when the accommodation was made to a pattern of Catholicism, since its multiplicity of saints made feasible parallelisms to a multiplicity of nature deities. But though syncretism occurs in many parts of the New World where Negroes live, the same identifications are not always made."

14. Rev. Dr. Edwin W. Smith: *See foreword to West African Religion* by Dr. Geoffrey Parrinder.

THE PANTHEON

The Pantheon—The *Big People*—given recognition at the compound is a mixed one embracing African deities of the Earth group, the Thunder group and others. While some grouping is recognised no worthwhile distinction is made among them. Some of the deities or *saints* manifest themselves to this day; others have not done so for some time. Manifestation is believed to take place through the medium of the possessed dancer, who loses her normal consciousness during the period of possession, and remembers nothing afterwards of what has occurred. The group of gods of the past and of the present day are :—

***DANGBWE** 1940 Serpent god. Symbol : *Ornamental stick with ribbon streamers*. Colours : *Green, Red and Brown*. Christian counterpart : *The Eternal Father*. Accepting the Christian counterpart on its face value one is apt to be confused by this African conception, for the Supreme Being for this cult group is not Dangbwe¹⁵, but Dada Segbo, while for the Christian the Eternal Father and the Supreme Being are synonymous. In West Africa a devotee of the Serpent Cult regards the python (the only snake considered sacred) as ancestral father, and upon encountering one of the sacred snakes from the cult-house he will salute it by *kissing the ground, calling it 'my father' because it is considered an ancestor, and asking its blessing*.¹⁶

OGŪ God of Iron and War; Patron of iron-workers. Regarded as the chief intermediary between man and the gods¹⁷. Symbol : *a wooden sword*. Colour : *Red*. Christian counterpart : *St. Michael*.

ELEGBA Believed to be the Devil; elegba,¹⁸ nevertheless, is not a demonic personage, but a mischievous one. He is also a guard and protector. He has no manifestation, and is given only a propitiatory offering.

Sakpata or Earth Group

These deities, four in number, are considered to have control over illness, mainly epidemics, particularly small-pox.

DA ZODJI No. 1 of the group. Symbol : *the H'rra*—a switch made by tying together a bundle of ribs from coconut palm leaves, locally called *cocoyé*. Colour : *Green and Brown*. Christian counterpart : *St. Anthony*.

* No manifestation since the year mentioned.

15. Prof. Herskovits in his *Dahomey* Vol. 2, p. 248 quotes a description given to him by a Dahomean distinguishing the difference between Dangbwe and the vodū (or god) Dā. For its poetic beauty and philosophic content, it is well worth re-quoting : *All snakes are called Dā, but all snakes are not respected. The vodū Dā is more than a snake. It is a living quality expressed in all things that are flexible, sinuous and moist; all things that fold and re-fold and coil, and do not move on feet, though sometimes those things that are Dā go through the air. The rainbow has these qualities, and smoke, and so has the umbilical cord, and some say the nerves too.*

Also, see M. J. Herskovits : *Life in a Haitian Valley*. p. 31 (pub. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) for a simplified summation of Dā—often spoken of as a serpent—as the principle of mobility "the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and by extension, of fortune."

16. Geoffrey Parrinder : *West African Religion*. p. 62.

17. M. J. Herskovits in *Life in a Haitian Valley* p. 31 (pub. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.) sums up Legba as "the interlocutor between man and the gods," but this Dahomean conception seems to have lost this significance here, for it is Ogū who appears to fill that role, propitiating Legba being held to be sufficient.

18. M. J. Herskovits : *Dahomey*. Vol. 2, p. 223 : The usual translation of the name of this god, found above all in missionary literature is *the Devil*, and in consequence, the native when asked by a European for an explanation of the nature of this deity contents himself with this characterization. Yet enough has been described of Dahomean religion to make it obvious that a concept such as that of the Devil of Christian theology, who represents the forces of evil in contradistinction to those of good, represented by God, is entirely foreign to Dahomean thought. The confusion has perhaps arisen through the emphasis that has been placed on that aspect of the character of Legba, or Elegba, which has to do with the trickery indulged in by this god.

- OBO ZUŌN or BO ZUŌN No. 2. Symbol : the *H'rra* or a hammer. Colours : *Green and Brown*. Believed to have great power over evil spirits and evil magic. Christian counterpart : *St. Jerome*.
- PARADA No. 3. Symbol : the *H'rra*, also wooden models of saw, plane and hammer. Colour : *Green and Brown*. Christian counterpart : *St. Joseph*.
- ABOBODJI No. 4. Symbol : the *H'rra*. Colour : *Green and Brown*. Christian counterpart : *St. Francis*.
- Xevioso or Thunder Group*
- SOBO The head of the group, and having three manifestations. Symbol : *Wooden Hatchet*. Colour : *Red*. His Christian counterparts are three in number : *St. John the Baptist* ; *St. John the Evangelist* and *St. John of the Cross*. He is the equivalent of the Yoruba thunder deity, Shango.
- AVLEKETE A goddess associated with lightning and the wind. Symbol : *A wooden model of a book tied with red and green ribbons*. Colours : *Red and Green*. Christian counterpart : *St. Catherine*.
- Other Deities*
- At the Compound, it is not clear now to which of the groups these gods belong.
- DA LUA A deity held in high regard, and one of the few who perform the Desunu or initiation rites over a novice. Symbol : the *H'rra*. Colour : *Pale Green*. Christian counterpart : *The Sacred Heart of Jesus*, but the elders give it as *St. Vincent de Paul*. From symbol and colour it would seem that this deity belongs to the Sakpata group.¹⁹
- Agē God of the Bush, hunter and lover of dogs. Symbol : *Bow and Arrow and red haversack*. Colours : *Red and White*. Christian counterpart : *St. Bernard*.
- OLOKO God of Trees. A deity which has had no manifestation and may have none. As in Dahomey the sacred tree is the Iroka or African Oak (*Chlorophora excelsa*), so locally the Sandbox tree (*Hura crepitans*) is regarded with corresponding reverence. A special ceremony has to be performed before it can be felled.
- *DA MORU 1903 Symbol : *Not known*. Colour : *Pale Brown*. Christian counterpart : *Noah*.
- AGBE²⁰ or AGBWE Goddess of the Sea and Water. Symbol : *Miniature oar*. Colour : *Blue*. Christian counterpart : *St. Ann*.
- NAETE²⁰ A Water Goddess. Symbol : *Lāsi* (horse hair switch). Colour : *Blue*. Christian counterpart : *St. Philomen*.
- E'MINONĀ Water Goddess. Symbol : *Lāsi*. Colour : *Blue*. Christian counterpart : *The Virgin Mary*.
- *ŪDEWANU 1902 Symbol : *Lāsi*.
- *AHOSU' ALOKWE 1905 Symbol : *Believed to be the H'rra*.
- *DAMBALLA MĀNSE 1903 Colours : *Black and White*. Christian counterpart : *St. Dominic*.
- *AWĀNGA²⁰ 1902 Aido Hwedo or the Rainbow.

*No manifestation since the year mentioned.

19. Prof. Herskovits in his *Dahomey* Vol. 2, p. 142 mentions Da Lua as included in one list of the Earth pantheon. He is given as a deity who remains at home with the chief and eldest member of the group, Dada Zodzi.
20. See M. J. Herskovits : *Dahomey*. Vol. 2, pp. 151-152 for these deities as belonging to the Thunder group of Dahomean gods, with Axwāgā listed as the second child of the god Agbe and the goddess Naete. (Peculiarly, Agbe has undergone a transformation in this community, and is conceived to be a goddess).

The last four deities mentioned on the list and also Da Moru possessed native Africans, and after the death of these Africans these deities have not since been manifest. Particulars omitted are unknown.

CEREMONIES

The religious ceremony or vodūnu (sacrifice to the gods) may be seasonal or non-seasonal. The seasonal sacrifices are :—

The January Sacrifice

This takes place on the first Thursday of each year, and no African name survives for it, if ever there was any. It is given for the young people of the community and they comprise the principal subscribers towards its cost.

Hwetanu or the Easter-tide Sacrifice

Held on the first Thursday after Lent, this is a sacrifice for the household and it is obligatory on every member of each home to make a contribution according to his means. Such contribution may range from six cents (3d.) upwards per individual, and no distinction is made between the modest donation and the generous. Much of the sacred azān is used at this post-lenten sacrifice. In addition to the usual places, festoons of it span overhead from the main house to the shrine of Ogū and from the vodūnkwe to the Sakpata shrine.

The August Sacrifice

No African name survives for this, and it is an anniversary for all the *saints*. The principal contributors are the vodūnsis. It is a grand affair at which animals for the sacrifice consist of a calf, goats, land turtle or morocoy, and fowls. Sheep and pigs are never sacrificed. The dancers wear white clothes for the morning sacrifice. In the evening, they wear clothes of the symbolic colours and the symbols themselves are generally used. In earlier times distinctive dress was worn, but the practice has since retreated into oblivion because of intolerance and scoffing. Very little is now remembered of this type of dress.

The Feast of E'minonā

This sacrifice takes place in September of each year. It is held for the children especially, and a Mass at the local church precedes it by a few days. Pigeons are prominent at the sacrifice, and so are guinea fowls. Preceded by a vigil on the Wednesday night, the ceremony runs for two days. On the Thursday, the day of the first sacrifice, the children, the vodūnsis and the drummers wear white clothing, and on the Friday all of them wear blue. Numerous small baskets are made from cardboard, some in blue, others in white. They are filled with bits of cake, sweets, and preserved fruit, all of which are home-made, and each child present receives one of them. But, before this is done, two of the Sobo deities

*No manifestation since the year mentioned.

Note : Where Christian counterpart is not known, it is probable that these deities may never have had any.

must appear,²² and each taking a pair of baskets, they dance to the drums. After the dance they retire to the vodũnkwe and the distribution is begun. The youngsters queue up, enter by the eastern door to receive their baskets, and pass out through the other. Azān appears in profusion as at the Easter-tide festival. An arch decorated with it spans the space between the Sakpata shrine, and the vodũnkwe under which the children pass in going for their baskets and the drummers sit beneath another in the dancing place.

Kututs

This takes place in November, and is given for the souls of the departed. A Mass for the Souls in Purgatory is commissioned at the church prior to the sacrifice, and is attended by all who are able to do so, thus linking Christian and African observances.

NON-SEASONAL SACRIFICES

During the interval between the seasonal ceremonies, any member of the compound may supply the necessary requirements for holding a sacrifice. The purpose may be that of thanksgiving, enlisting the assistance of the gods in some worthy cause, or a celebration in honour of a patron saint. Sometimes, a vodũnsi will hold a sacrifice for the deity by whom she becomes possessed, and she will apprise you of this, saying: *I am giving my father (or mother) food*. The deity speaking through her speaks of *his wife* if he is a god. A goddess refers to her devotee as *her child*.

Abobo

This is a small private ceremony held at the home without the accompaniment of the drums. It is done to bless the home, to ask for grace, for thanksgiving, or to obtain a *clearance* in times of trouble. Invited are a few friends, the vodũnsi the hobonō or high priest, and probably the heads of the compound. Possession usually takes place, or in other words: one or two of the *saints* usually come.

Vō

In times of illness and particularly in the case of an epidemic, this type of sacrificial ceremony is held. Sometimes, the warning of impending illness is given by the *Big People* themselves, with appropriate instructions, or the need for a *Vō* is implied from the interpretation of dreams. The special part of the ceremony is carried out during the Wednesday night's vigil, when a parcel of secret ingredients called the *vō*, is made up and sent away by messengers during the early hours of the morning. Usually two, they must be back for the morning sacrifice at 6 o'clock. The *vō* is sent to the cross-roads if it is a small affair. On occasions, it may be merely a live fowl which is liberated, symbolically taking the ill-luck to the four winds. On more important occasions, the *vō* has to be sent to the forest, to the sea, or to some large open space.

22. That is to say: two vodũnsis or dancers in a state of possession by the deity.

Kionu or Sîhû

The Kionu is a ritual for the dead held nine days after death, and it is performed only for highly considered or highly placed members of the community. It is held throughout the night and none of the usual drums are beaten. Taking the place of the main drum is an earthenware jar, which is beaten by the hand with the aid of a round flat fan-like frame covered with deer-skin. It produces a muffled and mournful sound. Two wooden tubs filled with water, in each of which float two large calabashes (or gourds) turned downwards, take the place of the side drums. The calabashes are beaten with sticks and a special repertoire of songs for the dead is sung. Coins are thrown into the water in the tubs, periodically, throughout the night, which offerings are the perquisite of the drummers. Sometimes, a gun is fired at mid-night and again at dawn, but this is now seldom done due to regulations governing the use of firearms. As morning approaches and the ceremony comes to an end, some of the water from the tubs is poured over the grave if it is nearby, and the calabashes and sticks are broken and strewn over it. A special rite called the Hoyo is performed at this stage, which consists of singing and beating the grave with the hands. If the grave is distant, the water and broken things are thrown away in the road. A few of the deities are usually manifest during the ceremony. The Kionu has become more and more infrequent. However, it was last held in 1951 for a very old member.

Ajohû

The Ajohû is a festival of pleasure at which all who wish to do so may dance. No possession takes place. Four special drums are used, which are not consecrated instruments like those for the sacrifices. Any evening during the week, except Sunday, may do for this occasion, and special pleasure songs are sung which are entirely dissimilar to those used in other ceremonies.

Gozên

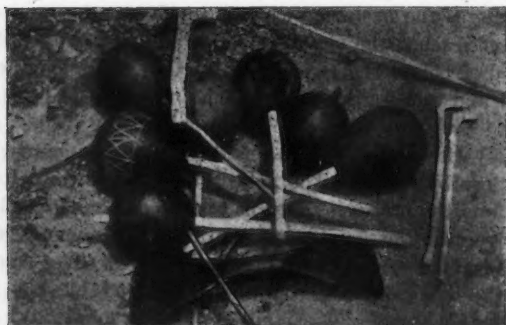
The Gozên²³ is a special and very infrequent ceremony which consists of a procession of goblet-bearers. It takes its place as an additional feature to a sacrificial ceremony and may also form part of the ceremony of initiation of a neophyte. The controlling factor is the necessary expense involved. A group of girls is chosen who have not yet reached the age of puberty, and they enter into retreat in the *convent* on the day before the ceremony. In the procession they wear white clothes, go barefoot and each carries a clay goblet on her head resting on a small silk-covered pad. The procession is led by the *saint* Agbe (a possessed devotee of the goddess) with symbol in hand, and to the accompaniment of the drums it proceeds to a nearby spring. The goblets are filled with water, coins are thrown into the pool, and the procession returns to the compound for the morning sacrifices. The goblet-bearers may not speak during this ceremony, to ensure which each girl is given a leaf to carry between her lips. Gifts of silver coins are made to the girls after the ceremony. The water, considered blessed, is preserved in their goblets in the *vodûnkwe*.

23. See Parrinder: *West African Religion*, p. 132. Gozên is here described as a special annual rite for the royal ancestors of Porto Novo—a coastal town in Dahomey near the Nigerian border.

The last Gozēn occurred in 1948, and that which preceded it was held some 60 years before about the year 1888. The founder of the compound was then alive and on that occasion he invited the Yorubas whose settlement lay about a mile away.²⁴ Around five o'clock in the morning the procession left the compound with Agbe in the lead, in dress of her symbolic colours and with oar in hand. The Rada drummers came next followed by the goblet-bearers. Behind them came the Yoruba drummers using large round calabashes or gourds as drums, each of which was covered with a net of fine twine with buttons affixed, which produced a rattling sound. The combined followers of the two groups brought up the rear. They proceeded slowly up the Valley Road to a spring about a quarter of a mile beyond, where a ceremony took place. It is said that it was a thrilling sight to see them with Agbe herself at the head advancing with graceful deliberation to the resounding accompaniment of the drums, and in steps suggestive of the dance. So great was the crowd that many were unable to get near the pool. On their return to the compound, the old man was there to receive them with a hat-full of silver coins in his hands. After the gathering-in of the leaves, he presented each of the goblet-bearers with several shillings. It was his last Gozēn.

In 1948 this ceremony, on a modified scale, was revived in honour of a daughter of the present head; it formed part of her initiation rites as a new devotee of the goddess Agbe. Fourteen young girls were selected as goblet-bearers. But conditions had vastly changed since 1888 and the colour and pageantry of the past did not fit in with the more or less alien atmosphere of the present day and the old spring was no more. So the heads of the compound organised a private ceremony at which the *saints* were asked to help them in their predicament. The story told to me is that at the site of the old spring at the north-western portion of the compound, which had long ceased to flow, a hole was dug in the ground about three feet square and about the same footage in depth. A little water began to ooze, and on the next day it was flowing crystal clear. It continued to flow during the Gozēn and for some three to four weeks afterwards, but has since petered out again, save for a slight dampness at the spot.

THE DRUMS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS



Chac-chacs; drum sticks and gān

Drums for the sacrifices are three in number, are consecrated, and have sponsors and special names. The main drum, beaten by the head drummer, and occupying the central position is called *Towonde*. It is beaten with a 14-inch stick crooked at the tip, and the palm of the hand. It cuts into the rhythm with a sort

24. The area forms part of the East Dry River 'section' of Port-of-Spain in the vicinity Observatory Street, Harpe Place and Quarry Street.



Drums used for the Ajohũ feast of the Radas

of sharp syncopated movement. On the right of this drum is Wyande, operated with two sticks, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and angled at the tip like the head drummer's. Its beat has a rolling sound. These two drums are made from the trunk

of the Zabaca or Avocado tree (*Persea americana*). Other woods sometimes used are Breadfruit and Cedar. To the left of the central drum is Hwen'do-masu, a drum made from a small barrel and which is beaten with a pair of thin sticks about 27 inches long. It has a steady rhythmic action providing solidity to the rhythm. This one, and the other side-drum are covered with goat-skin, but deerskin is used on the main drum because of its greater durability and better resonance.



The sacred drum—Towonde—held in position by the head drummer

In addition to the drums are the chac-chacs or maracas—small round calabashes with wooden handles put through them and containing a quantity of small seeds—and the gān, which is a round bar of steel about 13 inches long, a shallow arc in shape, and beaten

out flat at the ends to resemble a double hoe. It is beaten with a round thin rod of the same material and of nearly the same length.

Beating the drums looks intricate and it takes many years of training to produce a good drummer. The music, with the singing which gives way considerably to the drumming, has an urgency and excitement about it, can at times be gay, and when properly synchronised, enjoyable.

For the pleasure feast or Ajohū, different drums are used. Four in number, they are unblessed and bear no names nor sponsors. Three of them at the compound are made from the trunk of the Breadfruit tree (*Artocarpus incisa*), and the other from a small barrel. Two of them are covered with goatskin and two with deer-skin.

THE DANCERS

Only devotees who enter into a state of possession dance at the sacrificial ceremonies. Such a dancer is nearly always a woman and is possessed by one deity only. She is called a vodūnsi or wife of the god, and as many as two or three women may be possessed simultaneously by the same deity. Such a devotee takes the name of the god by whom she is possessed, and the suffix—si—(Dahomean for "wife") is added to give her a specific designation. Thus, one possessed by Ogu would be an ogūsi; by Agbe, an agbesi, and so on. No attempt is made by the possessed vodūnsi to induce possession in others. Possession appears to be spontaneous and subject to no control or selectivity by the hubonō or high priest, as obtains under indigenous Dahomean conditions. Nevertheless, the hubonō tries to induce possession in the vodūnsi through the employment of the specific song and drum-rhythm her deity is believed to favour. A vodūnsi may be male or female. The only male vodūnsis in the history of the compound were Alokasu and Kunu, the two companions of the founder, who had travelled with him from Africa and were such in their native land. Alokasu, 5 ft. 10 ins. in height and slim, died about 1903 and it is said that his eyes became very red and blood-shot when he was in a state of possession. He was an Agesi: that is to say a wife or devotee of the god Age. Kunu, ex-soldier and pensioner of the old West Indian Regiment, some 6 ft. 2 ins. tall and well-built, used to be possessed by the god, Awāngā, but since his death about 1902 that deity has never manifested himself. There have been no male vodūnsis since these two men died, or to use the current parlance—*no saint has come in the head of a man since then*. Possession does not appear to be voluntarily induced, and has occurred with or without the influence of the drums. None of the women I know wished to be subject to it. But once it does occur, as a rule, it is accepted willingly, not with regretful resignation. Still, in one case opposition was nurtured over a period of many years against "this thing that happens to her" but it proved of no avail. Her "saint comes" whenever he wills; at home, at the compound, and on one occasion at a city church where she went to pray for "deliverance." However, from her many experiences she now acknowledges the beneficence and protective influences of her "father" (the god) in her everyday life. Initial possession is nearly always violent in the sense that the new devotee usually falls to the ground and rolls. When, for the first time, a person "falls," as it is called, a special ceremony, the Desunu, has to be performed about three months after, followed by a thanksgiving one year hence. Without this rite, she is uncertain on her feet in the dance, she may not dance with

symbols, and cannot properly perform her functions as a vodūnsi. Formerly, such a neophyte occupied the *convent* for eight days before her initiation rites, but today the period is at most two days. It is a period devoted to learning matters in connection with her new position in the compound, to prayer and abstinence. At the time of her initiation, she does not take part in any of the pre-sacrificial rituals, but attends the morning sacrifice. After this, she retires to the *convent*, and re-appears at 3 o'clock in the afternoon for the Desunu, provided with new clothes, new comb, towel, goblet and basin. The ceremony is held in secret in the vodūnkwe, and ends with the washing of the head in a special ablution with water in which a variety of leaves have been crushed. She must be in a state of possession when this is going to be done, and a *saint* performs the rites. The deity Dangbwe officiated in his time, and now that he no longer "comes" it is done by Da Lua or Da Zodzi. The personal effects of the new devotee may not be used by anyone else. In earlier times, the identity of the deity possessing a new devotee was recognised by the type of song sung by Dangbwe—head deity manifest at the compound—and in her absence, by Da Lua. Today, the custom no longer obtains; firstly, because the dangbwe died twelve years ago and this deity has not been manifest since, and secondly, the devotee of Da Lua is a very old woman to whom possession comes infrequently. The neophyte, when she goes into the vodūnkwe, is now asked the identity of the god by whom she is possessed and is made to undergo tests of a secret nature by the head of the compound and the hubonō.

Occasionally, the vodūnsis dance with the symbols, but always they use a hat-band or sometimes a sash of the appropriate symbolic colours. If the conduct of the devotee in her personal life is not what it should be, or if instructions from her "father" are not carried out, or perhaps taboos are violated, the wrath of the *saint* is in consequence brought upon her by her own actions, with resultant punishment of some kind. Very many years ago, a possessed devotee who is quite an old woman now, uprooted a plait of hair from her head. It left a large raw wound, I am told, and the deity speaking through her, gave instructions for treating it. Possessed by their respective *saints*, as the gods are always referred to, the dancers have no after-consciousness of anything which may have transpired during the period of possession. In that state they seem to have oracular powers and a wisdom and moral philosophy unobservable in their normal selves. When possession is nearly over, there is a period in the transitional stage towards complete consciousness when the vodūnsi may act childishly or mischievously. Such an impish influence is the stage called Nubiduto, or Were.

THE SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY

The sacrificial ceremony called a Vodūnu or Saraka follows a regular pattern. It begins on a Wednesday night about 9 o'clock, and the vigil which is held until the following morning is called the Drozān. An old name is Zandrodro, which is hardly ever used today. The opening act is a small offering to Zlegba, consisting of cornmeal and water and olive oil, and the opening song is sung to him. For Zlegba has to be propitiated lest neglect anger him and cause evil influences to mar the sanctity of the rites. Recognition enlists him as custodian at the gates, and guardian against evil. Three songs to all the gods, each called a Yāvalu, then follow, and after this formal opening any of the other religious songs may be sung.

Usually, the only accompanying instruments are the *chac-chacs* and the *gān*, but on special occasions, depending upon the sumptuousness of the feast, the drums are used, but this is rare. During the period of singing without the drums it is usual for possession to occur, but not for any long duration. After a few dances, during which time no unpossessed person dances, the *saint* bids adieu, the *vodūnsi* retiring to the *vodūnkwe* or to the convent where possession quickly passes away. When no *saint* is present, however, anyone who wishes to do so may participate in the dancing, and the vigil can be quite a happy occasion, although free from abandon. Between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning the singing ceases and preparations for the sacrifice at 6 o'clock are finalized. About that hour the *hubonō* prepares his shrines. Lighted candles replace those which have burnt out on the shrines of *Ogū* and *Sakpata*, as well as on the altar in the *vodūnkwe*. It is daylight now, and the *hubonō* makes his offering to *Ogū*—olive oil, rum and water—and everyone gathers around the shrine for the most important part of the ceremony.

The *hubonō* salutes the east and west—*Mawu-Lisa*—and begins with a prayer to *Ogū*, intermediary of the *Big People*, that the sacrifice about to be offered be found acceptable to them. The kola-nut or *obi* assumes an important role at this stage, for it provides the means through which the gathering will know how quickly the sacrifice will meet with the gracious acceptance of the gods. Four halves of the nut are in his closed hands. With prayer and supplication he throws them gently to the ground towards the earth-mound shrine of *Ogū*. With intense interest everyone looks on to see the will of the gods. Sometimes, the half-nuts rest with one face up and three turned downwards or all four rest in the latter position, and all know that there has been no answer. Another throw by the *hubonō* accompanied by further prayer may result in still no acknowledgment by the gods, and the gathering become troubled in spirit. It is a tense and anxious moment for the *hubonō*, for it is usually felt that he has come to his work without that purity of body and soul required of him for the performance of the sacrifice, for he must cultivate purity of thought and be in a state of abstention from all pleasures of the flesh for at least five days before this, and in former years it used to be eight. A secondary thought is that ill-will pervades the community and this is displeasing to the gods. When delay of this nature occurs, the *hubonō* asks everyone to kneel, and praying again, he asks for the pardon of the gods for anything untoward amongst them. He tries again, and if the *obi* fall with all their faces turned upward, the road is now clear; if they come three up and one down it is *Age* who answers and it is a propitious sign. But, when the *obi* falls with two faces up and two turned down, there is relief and pleasure for the sacrifice has been accepted by the gods, and the *pa'obobo*²⁴ is given. The *hubonō* then seeks confirmation of the acceptance of the gods with the *deka*—a small round calabash. It is filled with water from *Ogū's* goblet and rests in the palm of his right hand. With a tremor of the hand, he lets the calabash fall to the ground. Acceptance is signified if it finally rests upturned. The *hubonō* then hurries off to the shrine of *Σlegba* and makes a small offering of food. As he returns, he places food on the shrine of *Ogū*, and, raising a chant to this deity, the sacrificing of the animals begins to the accompaniment on the drums. The feet of

²⁴The *pa'obobo* is an audible expression of gratitude, done by making a high-pitched monotone with the mouth, and moving the closed fingers to and away from it in quick successive movements to produce a staccato effect.

the feathered animals have by this time been washed in preparation for the sacrifice by a *daughter* of the goddess Naete; that is to say, a woman born at the time of year ruled by the *saint*, similar to the saintly influences of the Christian calendar. While the ablution was in progress anyone able to do so dropped a coin in the washing receptacle. Theoretically, it is the perquisite of the privileged washer, but in effect the collection is usually spent on extra needs for the feast if the occasion arises. Only cocks are killed before the Ogū kwe; hens are killed near the vodunkwe, and the larger animals before the shrine of Sakpata.

The food on the shrines of Ogū and Sakpata is cooked with salt, and the food in the vodunkwe or chapelle without. At Ogū, there are dishes of parched corn, black-eye peas cooked in whole grains with olive oil called abobo; and accras—fried vegetable batter. Some of the foods rest on mats of leaves of the Hog Plum tree (*Spondias monbin*). The sacred goblet of the deity filled with water and a couple of drinking vessels rest on the shrine, and a bottle of rum on the ground leans against it for use by anyone in the congregation. After the sacrifice proper anyone may help himself to bits of food from the shrines, as well as a drink at Ogū, the only deity for whom rum is used. Apart from other food, plates of boiled corn in whole grains and, boiled white rice with olive oil are put on the Sakpata kwe and in the chapelle where there is also a special dish of crushed bananas mixed with ground parched corn and made into balls. It is da'nududu or Dangbwe's food. In the chapelle on sacrificial occasions is a basin with amāsi, a special "medicine" of water and leaves which is sometimes used for sprinkling as a preventive against evil and for purposes of sanctification. The devout put the palms of their hands to it, to rub hands and face with the liquid for spiritual cleanliness.

The morning drums continue for about three hours. In the tent, singing or chatting casually, a vodūnsi may be taken by a sudden spasm which shakes her forcibly. Sometimes a quiet manner and a somewhat lost expression precedes the spasm. Thus taken, a vodūnsi sways to and fro and rises laboriously to stand on uncertain legs before going into the dance. Many pa'obobo are given as the *saints* come. The dancing is reserved, at times ecstatic, and there is a dignity of poise which never seems to be absent even as they dance in ecstasy to the heightened crescendo of the drums. The drums cease shortly after nine o'clock in the morning and the *saints* retire to the vodunkwe where they are consulted by members of the compound who wish to do so. In due course the possessed vodūnsi will retire to a bed in the *convent* or sit quietly there and her state of possession passes away unobtrusively.

Meanwhile, the compound is a busy place with the preparation of various meals for the day. A delectable dish called H'rrē is prepared for the midday meal. Some of it must first be served at the shrines before or after twelve noon, and after a short ceremony is performed, anyone may help himself to some of it. To prepare this dish, a cock and hen are boiled separately in large pots in much water. Inner parts as well as pieces of the meat of the larger animals are also similarly cooked. The meat is taken out, and corn meal with olive oil is boiled in the respective liquids to a congealed mass known as *cookoo*. This, together with the meat, is served as the midday meal. In the evening, a heavier meal is served, consisting of vegetables, bread, stewed meat, *cookoo*, ochroes and leaves boiled to a thick liquid and well known to West Indian palates as *callaloo*.

Before the general ceremony of the evening begins, the drums, led by the head drummer himself, have to beat out three drum movements, three times, without the singing and dancing. This is called the Σ legba'hū, and is a gesture of recognition and respect to Σ legba. The hubonō then leads the singing of two or three Yānvalus—songs to the saints and all the past hubonōs. After this formal opening, the general singing of the sacred songs proceeds with the beating of the drums and the dancing until ten o'clock.

If the feast is a sumptuous one, it will begin again on Friday morning with a sacrifice, when the remaining animals are killed. All the remaining food must be consumed on this day and h'rrē is made also with the feet and head of the larger animals which had been put to boil the night before. The first sacrifice always takes place on a Thursday, a sacred day²⁵.

The end of the sacrificial feast, which may be of one or two days' duration, is marked by the singing of the Kwemi—a song of thanksgiving. It is accompanied by chac-chacs and gān, but not by the drums, and all members of the congregation, in and outside the dancing tent, kneel for it. Then, the pa'obobo is given and the tent is completely vacated, leaving behind quiet and an air of solemnity.

A study of Dahomean customs and beliefs reveals that the Rada community at Belmont have succeeded in preserving a remarkable purity of strain.

²⁵ Parrinder ; *West African Religion*, p. 52. "One of the days of the ancient Dahomean four-day week (*mixi*) is sacred to Sakpata. No earth is tilled on that day, hence it is market day ; or Thursday where there is a seven-day week."

A Note on Bequia

CRADLE OF THE BLACK CARIB

Rev. C. JESSE

BEQUIA is the largest island of the Grenadines and lies 9 miles below Saint Vincent. It is a queerly shaped, hilly mass of some four thousand acres. In the year A.D. 1675 it was the scene of a shipwreck that became historic. A ship laden with African Negroes destined for the West Indian slave market foundered on reefs to windward of the island. The captives who succeeded in getting ashore were received kindly by the Amerindians who then occupied Bequia, and eventually intermarried with them. Their descendants, who retained more of the African pigmentation than of the Amerindian, came to be known as the Black Carib. At times they proved to be a source of trouble to their fairer-skinned relatives, the Yellow Carib, also to the English and French. During the disorders that followed the French Revolution of 1789, the Carib of St. Vincent revolted against the English¹. They were eventually quelled in 1796, when many of them were sent as prisoners to Balliceaux, a small island to the East of Bequia. On 11th March, 1797, English naval transports collected the rebels in Bequia, and it was from there that the Black Carib set out for the island of Rattan, off British Honduras, their new home. Today there are neither Yellow Carib nor Black Carib in Bequia, but high cheek-bones met with occasionally revive the souvenir of a race that has disappeared.

As I was in Bequia for a fortnight this year, I made an attempt to gather some information on the Carib and other possible early inhabitants of the island. Nobody apparently had ever seen or heard of middens or ancient ceramics there. Several people had come across stone artifacts. There, as elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles, these are called "thunderstones". No importance had been attached to these relics. A foreign yacht had once called, and children had gone around collecting stone axes, presumably for sale. In one place the artifacts had been broken up to make concrete. However, Dom van der Plas, the Vicar-General for St. Vincent, took me to see some rocks on the windward coast that proved to be highly interesting.

These rocks are situated on the right hand side of the bay which local legend associates with the wreck of the slave-ship in 1675. The bay faces eastward and has an islet and reefs at its entrance. A nearby estate called "Spring" appears to have given its name to the district. There is no river running into the bay, in fact there is no river at all in Bequia. But a swamp spreads out around the shore of the bay, and there was a little water in it on 1st April, towards the end of the dry season. It is impossible to say at present if the sea has encroached upon the shore at this spot, but the rocks in question are all now more or less washed by the waves, especially when the tide is in.

Now, on 7 at least of these rocks, regularly cut basins or depressions are to be found. I counted 20 of them. They are mostly on the flattish, upper surface of the

¹ It would seem that the Black Carib had spread from Bequia to the neighbouring islands, and so had taken part in the revolt.

rocks. With the exception of one round basin and 2 plate-like depressions, they are lenticular in shape. The latter, i.e., the lenticular, vary from 8" to 17" in length, from 2" to 3" in width, and from $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in depth. The round basin is 8" in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ " in depth. The plate-like depressions are about 12" in diameter and $\frac{1}{4}$ " in depth. But all these measurements are subject to correction, as waves were dashing over the rocks and myself as I took them. On one rock the lenticular depressions form a kind of triptych, on another a kind of diptych, on a third a pair of these diptyches.

The rocks are of a very hard, blackish stone, perhaps basalt, small rather than big. In spite of sea and sun, the basins or depressions are well preserved. One lenticular depression has obviously been broken in two by fractioning of the rock.

It would be impossible to say at present when, by whom and why these rocks were so worked. I believe one may safely rule out the colonisation period and the Negro slaves, as similar artifacts elsewhere seem definitely to belong to the Amerindian occupation. Knowing that the Carib were in Bequia from at least 1675 to 1797, it may be supposed that they themselves used the rocks in question for fashioning their celts. The place would have been in this case a kind of workshop.²

The fact that no middens with shells or ceramics have so far been found in Bequia is perhaps worthy of note. There are two spots in the island which seem to suggest a former Amerindian dwelling-place, but they have never been excavated, so far as is known. If no such middens really exist on the island, one may ask whether the Carib occupation does not date only from historic times, to the exclusion of any anterior occupation by the Arawak. In other words, Bequia may possibly be a purely Carib site of relatively recent date.

² On returning to St. Vincent from Bequia I was shown a portable stone that had been found at the mouth of the Yambo River on the windward coast. It offered a very fine specimen of rock-cut basins. The lenticular form was again in evidence.

EXTRA-MURAL NOTES

University Education In Labour-Management Relations

A. A. THOMPSON

With the rapid growth of trade union membership and strength in recent years, universities have taken more and more interest in the educational opportunities and needs which have resulted from this growth. The fifty-year-old University of Puerto Rico maintains an Institute of Labour Relations, and the four-year-old University College in Jamaica has friendly working relations with the University of Puerto Rico in programmes of research in the social sciences and in adult education. Its Institute of Social and Economic Research initiated a study of Labour-Productivity in Jamaica in 1949-50 which has involved re-examination of the methods of the study of productivity and may lead to co-operation with the University College Department of Pathology in studying the effects of sub-acute diseases on working capacity.

PIONEER UNIVERSITY-TYPE RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSES OF THE COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE ORGANISATION IN THE WEST INDIES

Anticipating the future work of the University College of the West Indies in the field of education in labour-management relations, the United Kingdom Colonial Development and Welfare Organisation in the West Indies organised and conducted university-type residential training courses in Barbados in 1948 and 1952 for two groups of twenty trade union officers from the seven territories now participating in the University College scheme. They were four-months' and three-month courses respectively.

The subjects studied at the first course, with the aid of experts, included *Trade Union Principles and Organisation, Industrial Relations and Labour Legislation*, as well as *West Indian Economic History* and the *Social Problems* of the region. The course was financed with the assistance of over £4,000 from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. The second course was financed from a similar grant of £5,000 and a special goodwill donation of £50 from the Trade Union Congress in the United Kingdom. The Labour Advisor to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies was Dean of the course, while Mr. J. D. M. Bell, Lecturer in Industrial Relations and Modern Economic History at Glasgow University, attended from the United Kingdom to take the major part in the lecturing and training.

UNIVERSITY TRAINING COURSES IN TRADE UNIONISM AND LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

(a) *British Guiana*

The British Guiana trade union movement is the earliest of the British Colonial trade union movements. In March, 1952, its Trades Union Council was composed

of sixty delegates from fifteen unions, with an aggregate membership of 11,203. The Federation of Unions of Government Employees, which was not then affiliated to the Council, comprised an additional six unions with an aggregate membership of 4,000.

The Trades Union Council's initiative in the field of workers' education which began in 1943 with the co-operation of the Department of Labour, is strongly supported by all unions, whether affiliated to it or not. The driving force in the programme of courses, which the Department of Extra-Mural Studies conducted for the Council in 1951-52, is a leadership-team composed of union officers who have been trained in the United Kingdom and Barbados under Colonial Development and Welfare schemes and the Department of Labour. This team has also provided the major part of the lecturing and tutorial panels.

The first activity was a ten-day residential course for forty-six union officers held in Georgetown. This was followed by a sixteen-day residential course in Georgetown for thirty-two union officers. Two additional week-end non-residential courses were conducted in Georgetown for thirty-four union officers in February and March, 1952; and at Bartica, Skeldonn and New Amsterdam three rural week-end courses were conducted for groups of rank-and-file union members numbering 44, 65 and 41 persons, respectively, in November and December, 1951, and January, 1952. Operational costs of the residential courses, additional to administrative and office expenses of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, were met by contributions from the Trade Union Movement, the Government of British Guiana and two large employer groups, amounting to \$865, \$480 and \$515 respectively.

(b) *Trinidad*

In 1949-50, Miss Edith Bornn, of the Caribbean Commission, conducted a twenty-session course under the title *Labour in Society* for the Extra-Mural Department. Its regular students numbered eighteen, most of whom were trade union members. In October, 1951, after a meeting representing twelve different unions, two one-year courses with weekly sessions were opened in *Trade Unionism*, one in Port-of-Spain, and the other in San Fernando, in which about thirty-five members stayed the course which included *History of the Working Class Movement*, *Trade Union Structure and Practice*, *Labour-Management Relations* and *Labour Legislation*. On the completion of these two one-year study courses, committees representing the interested unions were established to advise the Extra-Mural Department on further educational programmes of value to trade unionists.

(c) *Jamaica*

In Jamaica the Department of Extra-Mural Studies conducted a non-residential course in *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations* from October, 1951 to March, 1952 for one hundred and ten top and middle management men and union officers from twenty-four key industries, fourteen Government Departments, the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, the Sugar Manufacturers' Association, the All-Island Jamaica Cane Farmers' Association, the Jamaica Civil Service Association, the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union and the Trade Union Congress. Dr. Simon Rottenburg, Director of the Institute of Labour Relations at the

University of Puerto Rico, was visiting Lecturer to the course during January, and members of the staff of the University College Institute of Social and Economic Research provided valuable services. The cost of the programme was met by contributions from some of the industrial concerns of the island.

(d) Puerto Rico

Similarly, the University of Puerto Rico has now established a residential training school for Latin American trade union officers under the joint auspices of the Inter-American Regional Organisation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the University. The purpose of the school is to provide technical and background knowledge for the administration of democratic trade unions. The first course, which ended in December, 1952, had students in residence from Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Salvador, Colombia and Haiti.

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES IN EDUCATION IN LABOUR-MANAGEMENT
RELATIONS

What are the proper objectives of the University in the field of education in labour-management relations? With adults there can be no external compulsions for education as there are for children. Inner compulsions and social compulsions, however, can be very strong. Without these compulsions there can be no adult education. The purposes of adults grow out of inner and social compulsions, emerging from the stream of experience by way of those problems of daily living which adults are unable to solve without help through educational experience. These purposes tend to fall into four categories, although in actual situations they seldom occur in simple or single form. The first is to acquire skills. The second is to acquire knowledge. The third is to develop understanding. The fourth is to organise for co-operative action.

The majority of educators would probably agree that the basic objective of all true education is to produce more mature and intelligent action by stimulating clear, open-minded thinking after the truth—the type of thinking which expands horizons, causes the re-examination of previously-held conclusions, and eliminates prejudices and superstitions. Upon the basis of such thinking, education may help to develop the skills of democratic deliberation, planning and decision-making. As a university achieves these objectives it truly serves the interests of labour and management as well as the public interest.

CENTRAL OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING UNION LEADERSHIP AND
RANK-AND-FILE UNION MEMBERS

It is my personal opinion that university activities in the field of labour-management relations should have as their ultimate aim the development of better relations between the parties. Major questions arise, however, as to how directly this aim should be approached, and by what means. It would seem to be the better part of wisdom to concentrate university activities in this field primarily along the lines of promoting understanding, and letting co-operation develop, for the most part, during the normal relations between the parties.

Accordingly, the central objectives of the British Guiana programme of union leadership training are (1) to develop capable, knowledgeable, intelligent and

critical officers and to create confidence and ability to interpret and present the desires and aspirations of union members in matters relating to their economic, industrial and social welfare; (2) to help leaders appreciate the necessity of obtaining and marshalling all the information and all the facts necessary for the successful operation of union activities; and (3) to assist in building understanding of and loyalty to the trade union and allied labour interests.

The central objectives in the courses for rank-and-file union members is to improve the participation of union citizens (1) in all matters with which they are concerned as voters or public officials and all matters on which co-operative action is required to care for the welfare of the community as a whole or of groups within it; (2) not only in matters which are thought to be of concern to the organised public—voters and officials—but also in matters on which individuals and groups can work together in non-political ways.

METHODS OF EDUCATION IN LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: APPOINTMENT
OF A SPECIALIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE TUTOR

Having determined the proper sphere of activity of the university, a number of other technical questions arise. What are the methods by which a university may seek to achieve its objectives? Should instructions be given to labour and management groups separately or together? In what specific subjects should instruction be given? How should the tutors be selected? What materials should be used as teaching aids? These questions require a great deal of thought and discussion among university administrators and public officials, as well as among leaders of labour and management. The University College of the West Indies and the Colonial Development and Welfare Organisation are now convinced of the need for a specialist tutor in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies to co-ordinate and direct the activities of those agencies in British Guiana and the British West Indies. They have taken joint action to meet this need. An allocation of \$36,000 to the University College to finance the appointment of a tutor in labour-management relations for three years has now been announced by the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies.

Reviews

A BRIGHTER SUN. By Samuel Selvon;
pub. Wingate 11/6.

"You should buy this", said the book-seller, "it's a touching human story. I'll give you your money back if you don't think so!" So I bought *A Brighter Sun*; and I have not asked for my money back.

It is about the little-known East Indian rural life of Trinidad: how it neighbours with the Negro majority, and is served by the same Chinaman's shop. The events of the human lives depicted are placed in time by a few remarks at the beginning of each chapter about the war-time background—some naïf, some drily ironic. The central figures are Tiger and Urmilla, a boy and girl of sixteen, married as strangers according to the custom of their race, thrown into life as a separate household without any of the glamour of romantic love, and left to grow on together into manhood and womanhood. They are befriended by their Creole neighbours, Joe and Rita, who have themselves grown up the hard way in the slums of Port-of-Spain without losing human goodness: Rita has the character and realism of the women of her race; natural decency and unbounded generosity. Tiger is no hero; without, as it seems, religious or moral training, he behaves selfishly enough, and even brutally, to his submissive wife; but he has a seeking after knowledge and after God which promises to lift him. Both Tiger and Joe are unschooled: Tiger learns

to read from an old Indian: Joe thinks it foolishness and is happy without. When, at the end of the book, Tiger, wanting to share experience, is trying to write his own story, and feels the sameness of his life where day by day the same remarks are made and the same greetings passed, we are able to believe that he might grow to play his part in a larger scene.

The characters speak Trinidad dialect, which has verve and charm. They live in a world where children grow up, as it would seem, without tenderness around them, and are saved from callousness only by inherent goodness. This state of things is accepted: the simple objectivity of the narrative, its absence of analysis, comment or moralizing, leaves the reader to observe the life described as if through clear glass, and is singularly moving to the sympathies and imagination. The book is written without racial self-consciousness, sensitive to the good and evil of all races and quick with unspoken pity for the children who masquerade as men and women.

I doubt whether the author can repeat this study in living: it has the stamp of the one book which everyone can write with his own blood. But let us hope that, even if this is so, we shall have other work from Samuel Selvon's pen instinct with that wisdom which lifts *A Brighter Sun* above the sordidness and violence of individual lives and gives it a touch of universality.

—DORA IBBERSON

PERSONALITY AND CONFLICT IN JAMAICA. By Madeleine Kerr,
University of Liverpool Press 15/-

West Indian sociology has hitherto largely been a field of American scholarship. Miss Madeleine Kerr's book "Personality and Conflict in Jamaica" is a British contribution to this field of studies.

The author acknowledges her debt to Professor Herskovits and Dr. Abram Kardiner. The first has apparently been her main source of material of the Negro in the New World, and the other has provided her with a theoretical framework. Miss Kerr in

a sense is breaking new ground in that her study is concerned with the personality structure of the Jamaican. Kardiner has utilised the fieldwork material of trained anthropologists (Linton, Du Bois, &c.) in developing his theories of the basic personality. Miss Kerr has however relied on her own field material collected in the course of her work as social psychologist with the West Indian Social Survey (1947-49). It is unfortunate that this material is not as full as it might be. For example the reader is left with only a vague suggestion as to the type or types of family structure existing in Jamaican society. In regard to the

role of colour in the society the author does not relate this to the class system nor to the family structure. Again the literature of comparative areas such as the U.S.A. or Brazil (Dollard, Myrdal, Davis, Gardner, Pierson, Freyre, &c.), is not mentioned. The impression given is that Jamaican problems are of an unique nature, which indeed they may be, but not quite in the way suggested.

Miss Kerr's main thesis is that there is a conflict or clash between two cultures, the African and the European, the result being an insecure type of personality. Examples of this clashing of cultures do not always ring true. That the peasant represents one type of culture and the middle class another is not borne out by the facts given. Transition from one group to another in any class society poses certain problems. Jamaica is no exception—but the successful individual manages in time to achieve stability within his new class. It is possible that the author has allowed the evidence of insecurity undue prominence in her estimate of Jamaican personality structure. The fact of the matter is that the latter has evolved and developed in particular conditions and for those conditions exhibits a definite stability.

But the whole thesis under review depends upon the corroboration or otherwise

of the psychological test material. Unfortunately Miss Kerr has not seen fit to include more than a brief survey of the techniques used and the result—detailed analysis, is reserved for a further volume. It is therefore somewhat difficult to judge the validity of a correlation between field and test material.

Miss Kerr at the beginning of her book writes of the emergence of a specific Jamaican culture compounded of diverse elements—with this one is in complete agreement—but the main part of the book overemphasises the conflict and clash between the European and African streams. The result is to obscure the importance of the synthesis first stated. Evidence from a variety of fields suggests that where different cultures are in contact the resulting symbiotic relationship is of equal importance with the conflict inherent in the situation.

But the main criticism remains that owing to the inadequacy of the field material the book does entirely justify the hypotheses used nor the conclusions reached. Despite this "Personality and Conflict in Jamaica" as a pioneer study is a definite addition to the somewhat meagre sociology of the Caribbean.

—FERNANDO HENRIQUES



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